

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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Editor's Note: The Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents is also available on the Internet on the *GPO Access* service at <http://www.gpo.gov/nara/nara003.html>.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, May 12, 2000

**Statement on the Northern Ireland
Peace Process**

May 5, 2000

I am greatly encouraged that Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern have announced that their intensive talks in Belfast over the past 2 days have made progress, providing a sound basis for restoring the political institutions and achieving full implementation of the Good Friday accord. I urge the parties and paramilitary organizations to seize this opportunity to realize these goals in order to secure lasting peace for the people of Northern Ireland. The United States remains prepared to assist in any way we can.

NOTE: In his statement, the President referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Proclamation 7304—Global Science
and Technology Week, 2000**

May 5, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

At its core, science is an international endeavor. The fundamental workings of nature—the function of a gene, the quantum behavior of matter and energy, the chemistry of the atmosphere—are not the sole province of any one nation. At the same time, many of the greatest challenges our Nation faces are of global concern. Issues such as poverty, disease, pollution, and sustainable energy production transcend national boundaries, and their solutions require international collaboration. With the advent of the Internet and the revolution in communications technology, such cooperation is more achiev-

able—and more productive—than ever before.

In recent years, America has participated in numerous scientific endeavors that illustrate the feasibility and the benefits of international cooperation. For example, as one of 16 participating nations, we are advancing the frontiers of space exploration through a partnership to build the International Space Station. Working together in the unique environment of space, we will strive to solve crucial problems in medicine and ecology and lay the foundations for developing space-based commerce.

We are also participating in an international scientific effort to map and sequence all human chromosomes. With the completion of the Human Genome Project, we will have unprecedented knowledge about the cause of such genetic diseases as muscular dystrophy and Alzheimer's and greater hope of preventing them in the future.

Since the 1980s, under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program and the World Meteorological Organization, American scientists have been working with hundreds of scientists around the world to identify, understand, and raise public awareness about the threat to our planet's ozone layer. Our collaborative efforts have led to an international agreement to eliminate nearly all production of offending chemicals in industrialized countries and to work to reduce their production in developing countries.

Our Nation continues to reap rewards from these and other important international scientific efforts. We benefit enormously from the large and growing international scientific community within our borders. For generations, the world's brightest scientists have come to our country to study and conduct research, and many choose to remain here permanently. From Albert Einstein to four of this year's Nobel laureates, foreign-born scientists in America have made

extraordinary contributions to science and technology and have played a vital role in the unprecedented prosperity and economic growth we have experienced in recent years.

The great French scientist Louis Pasteur noted more than a century ago that “science knows no country, because knowledge belongs to humanity, and is the torch which illuminates the world.” During Global Science and Technology Week, America joins the world community in celebrating the immeasurable benefits we have enjoyed from international scientific collaboration and looks forward to a future of even greater achievements.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 7 to May 13, 2000, as Global Science and Technology Week. I call upon students, educators, and all the people of the United States to learn more about the international nature of science and technology and the contributions that international scientists have made to our Nation’s progress and prosperity.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 10, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 11. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President’s Radio Address

May 6, 2000

Good morning. Warm weather has finally taken hold in most of the country, and millions of families are now taking weekend picnics and hosting backyard barbecues. Today I want to speak with you about the foods we serve at these gatherings and how we can make them even safer than they already are.

Our food supply is the most bountiful in the world. And for 7 years now, our administration has been committed to making it the safest in the world. We’ve improved dramatically the Nation’s inspection system for meat, poultry, and seafood. We’ve added new safeguards to protect families from unsafe imported foods. We’ve established a sophisticated early warning system that uses DNA fingerprinting techniques to detect and prevent outbreaks of foodborne illness. From farm to table, we’ve made great strides to ensure the safety of our food supply. But outbreaks of food-related illnesses are still far too prevalent. In fact, millions of Americans get sick from eating contaminated food each year.

One threat we must address immediately comes from a foodborne pathogen called *Listeria*, which has been the cause of recent recalls of hot dogs and luncheon meats and several deadly outbreaks of disease. The most famous case emerged a year and a half ago, when *Listeria* killed 21 people and sickened 100 others, all of whom had eaten contaminated meat from a single plant. It was the Nation’s most deadly food safety epidemic in 15 years.

Fortunately, *Listeria* is less common than *salmonella*, *E. coli*, and other foodborne bacteria, but unfortunately, it is far more dangerous. A staggering 20 percent of *Listeria* infections result in death. As with other foodborne bacteria, it’s rarely healthy adults who come down with *Listeria* infections. Instead, it’s the most vulnerable among us: infants, the elderly, pregnant women, and those whose immune systems have been weakened by chemotherapy or AIDS.

While our administration has already taken a number of important steps to reduce the threat of *Listeria*, it’s clear we must do more to protect Americans from this deadly pathogen. So today I’m directing the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services to prepare an aggressive new strategy to significantly reduce the risk of illness from *Listeria*. As part of this strategy, we will propose new regulations to require scientific

approaches, such as systematic testing for *Listeria* at food-processing plants, not just random checks. This and other measures will allow us to cut in half the number of *Listeria*-related illnesses over the next 5 years and save well over 1,000 lives.

Today I call on the food industry to work with us as we develop our new *Listeria* strategy. And I call on Congress to help us strengthen food safety across the board. Just this week, unfortunately, the Congress took a major step backward by refusing to fully fund our food safety initiative. In fact, they've now voted to block funding for our new efforts to protect millions of American families from the dangers of *salmonella* poisoning in eggs. We should be doing more, not less, to ensure the safety of our food.

If we work together, we can make real gains this year. We can increase the number of inspections of domestic and imported foods. We can expand the FDA's authority to turn away imported food that does not meet our high safety standards. And at long last, we can give the Department of Agriculture the authority to recall bad food and impose civil penalties for repeat violations. After all, the Department has the right to penalize a circus to protect animals from harm; it's about time we gave them the tools they need to protect human beings from harm, too.

Ensuring the safety of our food and the health of our people are among the most important parts of our citizens' basic contract with their Government. For the sake of millions of Americans, especially the most vulnerable among us, it's an obligation we simply must work together to uphold.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:47 p.m. on May 5 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 5 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Memorandum on Reducing the Risk of *Listeria Monocytogenes*

May 5, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Health and Human Services

*Subject: Reducing the Risk of *Listeria Monocytogenes**

Food safety is a vital issue for all Americans. When people across this country sit down to a meal at home or in a restaurant, they expect that the food they eat will be safe. While the U.S. food supply is abundant, the marketplace has evolved from one dominated by minimally processed basic commodities for home preparation to one with an array of highly processed products that are ready-to-eat or require minimal preparation in the home.

To take account of the changes in the way Americans eat and to ensure that America's food supply remains safe, my Administration has made wide-ranging, dramatic improvements in food safety. We have worked successfully to revolutionize our meat and poultry inspection system, instituting scientific testing and pathogen reduction controls to target and reduce dangerous pathogens like *Salmonella* and *E. coli* O157:H7 and the illnesses they cause. We also have implemented an innovative system of preventative controls for the seafood industry, published industry guidance to improve the safety of fruits and vegetables, and taken steps to prevent unsafe imported foods from reaching American consumers. My Food Safety Initiative is now in its third year of improving food safety surveillance, outbreak response, education, research, and inspection. In 1998, I issued an Executive Order creating the President's Council on Food Safety (Council), which oversees Federal food safety research efforts and is currently developing a comprehensive, national food safety strategic plan. It is under the Council's auspices that my Administration produced last year an Egg

Safety Action Plan with the goal of eliminating illnesses from *Salmonella Enteritidis* in eggs. Additionally, we launched a high-tech early warning system called PulseNet that uses DNA-fingerprinting techniques to help us better detect and prevent outbreaks of foodborne illness.

These and other efforts have helped to make meaningful improvements in food safety. But we can do even more. Millions of Americans get sick from eating contaminated food each year. With changing patterns of food production and consumption, we must continue to aggressively meet the food safety challenges of the 21st century.

One challenge we must address immediately is that of *Listeria monocytogenes*, which can cause a severe infection called listeriosis. Listeriosis is a significant public health concern, and is especially lethal, resulting in death in about 20 percent of cases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 2,518 persons become ill and 504 persons die each year from listeriosis. Pregnant women with listeriosis can pass the infection on to their unborn children, potentially resulting in severe illness or death to the fetus or newborn infant. Others at high risk for severe disease or death are the elderly and those with weakened immune systems. Ready-to-eat food products, such as lunch meats, smoked fish, certain types of soft cheeses, and hot dogs, are among the foods most commonly associated with food-related illness from *Listeria*. To address this serious public health problem, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture (USDA), is conducting a risk assessment on *Listeria monocytogenes* to determine which foods warrant further preventive measures. This risk assessment will be completed shortly, and I believe we must build on what is already being done to target this deadly organism.

My Administration's goal—articulated in our Healthy People 2010 plan—is to cut the number of illnesses caused by *Listeria* in half by 2010, from 0.5 cases to 0.25 cases per 100,000. To meet and exceed this goal, I hereby direct you, in cooperation and consultation with the Council and relevant Federal agencies, to report back to me within

120 days on the aggressive steps you will take to significantly reduce the risk of illness and death by *Listeria monocytogenes* ready-to-eat foods. In particular, within this time period, I direct the Secretary of Agriculture to complete proposed regulations that include any appropriate microbiological testing and other industry measures to: 1) prevent cross-contamination in the processing environment; 2) ensure that the processing of ready-to-eat products meets appropriate standards; and 3) ensure that such products are safe throughout their shelf life. In addition, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, within this time frame, to develop an action plan identifying additional steps necessary to reduce *Listeria monocytogenes* contamination. This plan should include consideration of control measures for at-risk foods and the publication of guidance for processors, retailers, and food service facilities. Finally, you should consider whether enhanced labeling is necessary to provide additional safeguards for consumers. These actions should be based in science and should establish the foundation for a comprehensive approach that significantly reduces the opportunity for *Listeria* product contamination and *Listeria*-related illnesses to occur. All these actions, taken together, should allow us to achieve our Healthy People Goal by 2005 rather than 2010.

These steps will continue to ensure the safety of America's food supply and will help protect some of the Nation's most vulnerable populations from foodborne illness.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was embargoed for release by the Office of the Press Secretary until 10:06 a.m. on May 6.

Remarks on Departure for Fayetteville, Arkansas, and an Exchange With Reporters

May 6, 2000

Northern Ireland Peace Process

The President. I would just like to make a brief statement about the acceptance by the IRA of the proposals by Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern. This is a very good day for

the people of Northern Ireland. It is a truly historic step. For the first time, the IRA is clearly committed to decommissioning and a process to get there. I applaud that. I want to thank the Prime Ministers and Gerry Adams and everyone else who was involved in this. But this is a very good day.

Q. Do you think it will stick?

The President. Well, I do. Of course, the Unionists still have to formally accept it, but this idea of storing the weapons and having the storage site monitored, I think, is a way for both of them to achieve their previously stated objectives, both sides. So it's a very, very good day.

Q. Weren't we at this point once before, sir?

The President. No, we never got this far on the details of the implementation. We always knew, I think, that the sequencing of decommissioning and the full implementation of the accords by both sides and by the British Government would be a problem. And that's really what this last year-plus has been about. For all of us who've worked on it, this is a very happy.

But I really appreciate the work done by Prime Minister Blair and Prime Minister Ahern and the fact that the IRA has accepted it, and the Sinn Fein has obviously had a role in that. So this is a big step. And they've reached out to the Unionists now. Of course, I hope it will be fully accepted by all parties, and we can get the Government back up and go on.

Senate Opposition to the Nomination of Enrique Moreno

Q. Why do you think the two Texas Senators—did they reject your nominee because he's Hispanic, Mexican-American?

The President. There are only two conceivable alternatives, I think. That or they just don't want to confirm any judges unless they're rightwing ideologists. I mean, this man had unbelievable academic credentials. He was endorsed by every conceivable professional association. He was consistent with the judges I've appointed for over 7 years now, highly qualified and clearly in the mainstream of the American judiciary.

But you know, they like judges that are more results oriented, and it may be that they

just want to use this opportunity to try to seize control of the judiciary again. For them, it's all too often a political arm of the Government. But to do this to a Hispanic judge from Texas, who has made himself into an excellent lawyer and a superbly qualified person is just unconscionable. I mean, it's unbelievable.

If their committee didn't find this man qualified, I'd certainly be interested in knowing what the criteria of their committee is.

Q. But you're not charging that two U.S. Senators are prejudiced against Hispanics, are you?

The President. No, I'm saying that—you have to ask them, and people can draw their own conclusions. They may or may not be. But since he's clearly well-qualified and everybody virtually in the world with an opinion has endorsed him, if it's not that, it's that they want somebody who's more politically malleable.

As I said, all you have to do is look at the way so many of their judges perform. They're highly results oriented when they appoint judges. I just try to appoint people I thought would be fair and interpret the law and be balanced and represent this country. So it might be politics and ideology. But it's a terrible, terrible day for the Hispanic community and for the idea of fairness in the judiciary.

Q. What's this going to do—[inaudible]—election, Mr. President?

The President. I don't know. I don't have a comment on that. I'd rather—to me this is—I made this appointment; this man was qualified on the merits, superbly qualified. And he's from a State with a huge Hispanic population and a big caseload, and he deserved a hearing, and he deserved to be confirmed. I think it's just disgraceful.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:15 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams; and Enrique Moreno, nominee, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Opposition in the Senate to the Nomination of Enrique Moreno

May 6, 2000

Senators Gramm and Hutchison announced yesterday that they opposed the confirmation of Enrique Moreno, my nominee for a Texas vacancy on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Their claim that he lacks the necessary experience to serve on the fifth circuit is unconscionable. The American Bar Association, which has rated judicial nominees for Republican and Democratic Presidents since the Eisenhower administration, unanimously gave Moreno their highest rating. The son of Mexican-American immigrants and a graduate of Harvard Law School, Moreno was rated one of the top three trial attorneys in El Paso by State judges.

In rejecting Moreno's candidacy, the Texas Senators have ignored the strong endorsement of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic National Bar Association, and local law enforcement officials. This is not the first time that the Texas Senators have rejected an exceptional Hispanic candidate for this seat, which has been vacant for more than 3 years. Jorge Rangel was forced to withdraw after the Texas Senators refused to allow action on his nomination. By blocking qualified judicial nominees, Gramm and Hutchison have exacerbated the vacancy crisis on the fifth circuit. Their unjustifiable opposition to Enrique Moreno—an exceptionally well-qualified Hispanic judicial nominee—must not be allowed to stand.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

May 6, 2000

I want to join Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern in welcoming the IRA's commitment to initiate a process that will completely and verifiably put arms beyond use and its decision to resume contact with the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning. This is a significant step toward realizing the full promise of the Good Friday ac-

cord. I urge the loyalist paramilitaries to do the same.

I express appreciation to Martti Ahtisaari and Cyril Ramaphosa for their willingness to take part in confidence-building measures involving third party inspection of IRA weapons dumps. I have great confidence in their ability to contribute to this important task.

These developments offer renewed hope to the people of Northern Ireland that politics will once and for all be pursued through exclusively political means. The United States remains ready to assist this process in any way we can.

NOTE: In his statement, the President referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland; and former Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa's African National Congress.

Remarks at a Reception for Hillary Clinton in Little Rock, Arkansas

May 7, 2000

Thank you very much. Vic, thank you for being here. Marion, thank you for being here. Vic Snyder was one of the bravest people in the Arkansas State Senate when I was Governor. When he ran for Congress, I told Hillary, I said, "I'm afraid he can't get elected. He's got too much guts. He'll say what he thinks about everything." But he got elected, and he got reelected. And I thank—when Marion Berry ran for Congress after doing a stint in our administration in the Agriculture Department, Dale and David and I really felt that he was entitled to be in Congress, almost as a conciliation prize for having hosted us at the coon supper in Gillette all those years. Anybody who could get us to eat coon for 10 or 15 years in a row should be given a seat in Congress, just as a matter, of course. But I thank them so much.

The other night when I was home, a couple of weeks ago—or maybe it was last week—to dedicate the law school here to Bill Bowen and to do the event in honor of our friend, Daisy Bates, Dale and David and I went to dinner alone, just the three of us. And we needed adult supervision. [*Laughter*]

If there were a tape of the conversation we had—we relived everything we had ever done together, and amplified it all in an unconscionable way. I don't know when I've had as much fun. And Barbara, you should have been there to give us a little civilizing influence, but we had a good time.

Today mostly is a day for us that is full of sentiment and gratitude. I want to thank you for all you've done for us over the years. I want to thank you for things large and small when I was Governor and for backing us in the two times I ran for President. Yesterday I did have a chance to travel the backroads of Logan and Franklin and Madison and Washington and Benton Counties and to relive my first race for Congress in 1974. We went to Stephanie Streett's wedding in the beautiful chapel in Subiaco. I thought about all my old friends, including a lot of them, unfortunately, who aren't around anymore.

And Hillary and I both agreed that if we hadn't had to start our careers in public life in a place where you actually had to go see people and listen to them, instead of someplace where you just spent all your time raising funds to run television ads, our lives would have been very different, and I never would have had a chance to be the President.

I also was reminded of the first time I brought Hillary to Arkansas, and I picked her up at the airport here in Little Rock, and instead of going to Hot Springs, I drove her up to River Valley, and then we drove down Highway 7, a fairly indirect way, but I wanted to give her a sense of what I hoped she was getting into.

I'm looking forward to building this library and policy center, and we're going to have big apartment on top of the library. We're finalizing the plans now. I'm trying to keep this library to a reasonable price, somewhere around \$125 million. But I want it to be a world-class building, a place that is beautiful and distinctive for our State, that will capture the imagination of the people and that will in some way, some small way, try to repay the people of Arkansas for all they have done for me. And we're going to have a nice apartment there, and I'll be there a lot. Even Senator Hillary will be there some, too, when I can work it out.

I want to say a few things that are more comfortable for me to say, I think, than Hillary, before I bring her on. When Senator Moynihan announced that he would not run for the Senate again and the New York Democrats were trying to decide, you know, what they were going to do, they didn't just want to give the Senate seat back to the Republican Party and to Mayor Giuliani, and they knew he would be a very formidable candidate, that it was a seat that had been occupied by Robert Kennedy and then by Pat Moynihan. And all these House Members started calling Hillary. Then they started calling me to lobby Hillary.

And we talked, and I had always hoped she would have a chance to run for office and to serve because I thought she would be so good. But we decided she needed to go up there and just visit people, just the way we did so long ago in all those communities I went through yesterday. Every town of any size, I had been in every store in town more than once that we went through. And so she did and came back and said, "You know, the stuff I've worked on all my life is really what they need. Someone who cares about the education of our children; how families balance work and child-rearing; somebody who knows something about health care; somebody who knows something about bringing economic opportunity to underdeveloped areas." If New York State, upstate—that's exclusive of the suburbs and the city—were a separate State, it would be 49th in job growth in my tenure as President, something that I have tried to help on. And much of what needs to be done there is what we've tried to do in the Delta and other rural areas of our State.

And she had so many people who wanted her to run and wanted her to do it that she really decided that she ought to try. And then I just practically beat her up time and time again, working on this announcement speech. She said, "I've given a zillion speeches. Why do you keep doing this?" I said, because an election is a job interview, and if you get the job, it helps to have decided in advance what you intend to do when you get there.

And one of the reasons I think that the people here were good enough to elect me

Governor five times is I always tried to be the candidate of change. I always tried to lay out what I wanted to do, and I always tried to be doing what I said I would do in the election. And one of the things I'm proudest of, a little known fact, is that in 1995, a Presidential scholar who at that time I had never met said that by '95 I had already kept a higher percentage of my campaign promises than the previous five Presidents. And I'm proud of that.

So she worked on that. And I thought she gave a terrific speech that day, with a wonderful program. And she showed that movie, which has a lot of Arkansas in it, as you saw.

Now, I want to make one general statement before I bring Hillary up here. This is a huge election. This election is just as important as what happened in '92, when this country was in terrible trouble. A lot of people have forgotten how bad it was in '92. And that's not good. It's just as important as it was in '96, when the American people decided to give me another chance to try to finish what I'd set out to do.

But we have worked so—I've tried hard to take good care of this, and Hillary has been involved in so many of the things we have done together these last 8 years. But so much of the time we spent—Dale and David were saying they were glad they were part of it—all we did was make unpopular decisions in '93 and '94, because we had to do hard things to get this country turned around again. Hillary made fun of me today. She said there was some article talking about that I had real good job ratings, and if they could just take out the first 2 years, they'd be perfectly astronomical. Well, in the first 2 years, I had to do all the hard stuff that made it better the last 6.

And so we got the country turned around. And the unemployment rate last month was 3.9 percent, for the first time in over 30 years. And that's good. The welfare rolls have been cut in half; 90 percent of our kids immunized for the first time, something I know is very important to Dale and Betty Bumpers. Today the statistics were to be released, or have already been released, showing that crime has come down every year, down another 7 percent across the board. Only about three dozen cities in the United States last

year, in the whole country, had an increase in the crime rate.

So things are going in the right direction. But the big test for a country is, what do you do when things are going well? What do we propose to do with our prosperity, with the fact that our social problems are lessened, with the fact that we've got the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rate ever recorded? What are we going to do with this?

And in all fairness, one of the reasons that our adversaries in the other party, beginning with the Presidential nominee, are sort of trying to blur all these issues and say, "We care about all those things that Bill Clinton and Al Gore worked on for 8 years," is that they hope that people will forget what it was like in '92. But there are huge decisions before you.

And as sentimental as I feel today, elections are always about tomorrow. And what I wanted to do with all my heart is literally build a bridge for this country to the 21st century, so that when I left office, America would be in a position to build a future of our dreams for our children. To me, that's what this whole thing was about. And I was furious and disappointed in 1991, when I saw our country just paralyzed in Washington—nobody getting anything done, everybody fighting, partisan politics the order of the day, which, unfortunately, there's still too much of there.

And so we set about doing things. But it's important for all of you to focus—if you believe that the results were good, it's not just because you knew me and you saw I gave a good speech and I was a pretty good guy. What we did was—those were the right things to do. You can be as eloquent as you want, and if you advocate the wrong thing, you'll get the wrong result.

That's what—this election for the Senate is a big issue. It really matters who is in the Senate. The Republican Senators from Texas just announced a couple of days ago that they weren't even going to even permit a hearing on an Hispanic judge who was from El Paso, who graduated cum laude from Harvard and Harvard Law School and was endorsed by every single organization with an informed

opinion. Why? Because he wasn't ideologically far enough to the right.

This is a big election, and I can tell you who's in the Senate makes a huge difference, for good or ill. And you're going to have to decide, including in Arkansas, whether you want to build on the progress for the last 8 years or reverse the policies. Do you like this economic policy? If you do, you better stick with it and build on it. Do you believe that it's a good thing that the educational attainment is going up, the college-going rate is going up, more people than ever before can afford to send their kids to college? If you do, you've got to build on it, and the same thing with the environment and the same thing with health care and with national security. The other party is honestly opposed to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. And if they do what they say they're going to do, there's a real chance we could have a new arms race again in the world, which is the last thing in the wide world we need. We've got enough problems out there with the terrorists and the drug runners and the organized criminals, without setting off another arms race.

So, you know, I'd like to come home and just make this a perfectly happy thing, but I'm telling you, this is a big decision that the people will take. And this election of 2000 is every bit as important, even though I'm not on the ticket—and a lot of you did a lot for me. You went to New Hampshire. You did all the things in the wide world. What was going on in '92 and '96—that was important, but the 2000 election will determine whether we really like the direction of the country and we want to continue to change built on that, or whether we say, "Well, we feel so good now, what they say sounds good; I think we'll go back to their economic policy and their education policy and their health care policy and their environmental policy and their foreign policy." This is a huge, huge decision.

And that's why I thought it was a good thing for Hillary to run. Because I've been doing this a long time. I never—I don't think any State ever had two Senators working together that were remotely as good as Dale Bumpers and David Pryor. They were the best team I ever saw. I have—I served with

150 Governors, and I've seen another 100 run through the White House since I've been there. I've got—you know, I realize I am prejudiced in this, but I know a lot about public service and public service efforts. And I have spent the last almost 30 years now, having conversations with my wife about every conceivable issue.

I watched her when she started the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. I watched her when she ran this education standards program here, when a lot of our kids couldn't even get science and math courses in their schools. I watched her labor to try to get rid of all the ridiculous Federal barriers to people adopting children and to try to get us to adopt policies up there that would enable working families to afford health insurance and deal with a whole lot of other issues.

And in my whole life, I have never known anybody that had a better grasp of the issues, a better ability to organize, a better ability to get people who thought they would never get along to work together and could get up every day and just keep going, than Hillary, never—not a person.

So, I think the Senate would be a much better place if she were there. I think she would do a superb job for the people of New York. I think she would be great for America. I think you know that, and you will never know how grateful we are that you're here today. And I hope you'll make her feel welcome.

Come on up, Hillary.
Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. in Hall A at the New Statehouse Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to William H. Bowen, former dean, University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Law; Representatives Vic Snyder and Marion Berry; former Senator Dale Bumpers and his wife, Betty; former Senator David H. Pryor and his wife, Barbara; Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City; Enrique Moreno, nominee, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Statement on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report

May 7, 2000

Today the FBI released new 1999 statistics showing that crime is down for an unprecedented eighth year in a row, continuing the longest decline on record. The decline in crime has reached Americans living in communities of every size and in every region across the country. Data from the 1999 FBI Uniform Crime Report show that overall crime fell 7 percent, with crime down in every category of offense. Violent crime dropped 7 percent, including an 8 percent drop in murder, and property crime fell an additional 7 percent. In 1999 there were over 8,000 fewer murders than in 1992.

This good news confirms that our anticrime strategy—more police officers on the beat, fewer illegal guns and violent criminals on the street—is having a powerful impact. We know we can turn the tide on crime, because we have. But despite this success, we cannot let up on our efforts. Gunfire continues to claim the lives of nearly 12 children every day, and we need to work on every front to reduce gun violence. With Mother's Day approaching, I will continue to urge the Congress to put the interests of America's families over those of the gun lobby and pass commonsense gun safety measures to keep guns out of the wrong hands. Together, we can make America the safest big country on Earth.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 5 but was embargoed for release until 6:01 p.m. on May 7. It was also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Million Mom March Organizers and an Exchange With Reporters

May 8, 2000

The President. Hello, everybody. I just finished a meeting with Attorney General Reno and Secretary Shalala and Chief of Staff Podesta, and I have met with all these folks, these women and their men supporters

who are the organizers of the Million Mom March. They're going to be here and in over 60 other cities on Mother's Day, marching for commonsense gun safety legislation, asking Congress to act, building on the grassroots efforts that have brought success in the petition drive in Colorado and the Legislatures of Maryland, Massachusetts, and California.

And I think what they're doing is profoundly important. We in the administration want to do whatever we can to support them. They are taking a stand for their children. Many of them have lost loved ones. They have lost children. They have lost spouses. And there will be many more just like them who are here.

They want Congress to act on the commonsense gun legislation before it, and of course, they want Congress to go beyond that to licensing, registration. They have not proposed taking away anybody's gun. They have proposed making life a lot safer for the American people and their children. And I think what they're doing is a very noble and good thing. I hope it will prompt Congress to act.

It is unconscionable—it is now over a year after Columbine and over 10 months since they've had a chance to pass this legislation. And I hope their presence here will—and throughout the country—will be successful. I am quite sure they will succeed over the long run if they stay with it, because they represent the heavy majority of the American people, and they have borne a heavy burden in their own lives which they have been willing to put into this effort. And I'm very grateful to them.

Gun Safety Legislation

Q. What's stopping Congress from acting, at least pressure from the moms——

The President. Well, we'll see if this makes a difference. I think that the people in the gun lobby have historically been very effective. But I think that if you look at the specifics of the legislation before Congress, there's a huge majority of the American people for it. And I think what all these folks are going to remind them of on Mother's Day is that they're watching, and they want action.

And this is not an issue that can be dealt with in business as usual and buried for the—[inaudible]—interest groups. It needs to be resolved, and I hope it will be. And if it does, it will be far more because of them than because of us. The only way we can pass this is if people have to look into the eyes of parents who have lost their loved ones, if they have to look into the eyes of people who have lost their spouses, their brothers, their sisters, and answer why don't we have this common-sense safety legislation; why is this the only area of our national life where we don't have prevention as our primary strategy?

They won't be able to answer that. You can't talk to these folks that have been talking to us this morning and answer that.

Death of John Cardinal O'Connor

Q. Mr. President, you're going to the funeral of Cardinal O'Connor today. Can you give us some thoughts this morning on his impact on America and religious life, and what his passing might mean for the future?

The President. Well, I'm going because he was a leader of the Catholics and the biggest Catholic diocese in the country and because, in particular, he was a devoted chaplain in the armed services. And I feel particularly grateful for that. And of course, it will be up to the Church and to the Pope to decide his replacement and what happens after that. But I think he played a very large role in the life of the Church. Even when he was controversial and when he disagreed with me, I liked the fact that he was outspoken, and he stood up for what he believed in.

Israeli Interim Framework Agreement

Q. Mr. President, the Israeli Foreign Minister said today that the Gaza is so big that it's clear that there's not going to be an interim framework agreement. Are you disappointed by that?

The President. I just disagree with it. I think there will be a framework agreement.

Q. By the deadline, sir?

The President. Well, maybe not by the deadline. But they thought they might trip the deadline a little. But I think we'll get an agreement, an overall agreement by September. And I think they'll get there. There

are substantial gaps, but if they want to do it bad enough, they'll do it.

Situation in Zimbabwe

Q. Mr. President, can you comment on the situation in Zimbabwe with the farmers and squatters there?

The President. Well, I've got Ambassador Holbrooke over there now working on a lot of the troubles in Africa, including the situation in Zimbabwe, and I hope it can be worked out in a lawful manner. And I think it's quite sad what's going on because it's a very important country, and it's very important to South Africa and South Africa's future, as well as to the future of the people who live in Zimbabwe. And I hope we can get them—we can do something that will encourage them to return to a progressive and stable path. They're working at it.

Situation in Sierra Leone

Q. How about Sierra Leone?

The President. We're working now on what can be done to restore the vigor of the U.N. peacekeeping mission there and make it work. It's very important. I spent a lot of time on that the last 4 or 5 days, and we're working on it.

Gun Safety Legislation

Q. You seem very subdued. Do you have a cold?

The President. No. I'm just—if you had been here talking to these people about all their children's lives and all that, you'd feel subdued, too. I mean, I just—I feel very sad that I haven't been able to get this legislation voted on. I think this is a really big deal.

We've gotten—yesterday we got the crime statistics—crime down 8 years in a row, murder at a 30-year low. But it's still one of the most dangerous countries in the world, only because we have stubbornly refused to take prevention seriously when it comes to guns, to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. And we've had the crime rate come down 8 years in a row, so we now know we can turn the crime rate around. And the next big barrier to bring it way down and make this a really, really safe country is to take these commonsense preventative measures.

And yes, I am subdued. I'm frustrated, and I'm very sad because I don't want any more kids to die. And I want them to come here on Mother's Day, and I told them before you came in here that if they didn't get tired, they'd win this fight. I've been watching these kinds of issues all my life, and it's like civil rights or something where there's this huge organized resistance. But if they just keep at it, they're going to win.

I think they should have won more already, and I'm going to do what I can to help them.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs David Levi of Israel; and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Richard C. Holbrooke. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the District of Columbia Courts' Budget Request

May 8, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the District of Columbia Code, as amended, I am transmitting the FY 2001 Budget Request of the District of Columbia Courts.

The District of Columbia Courts have submitted a FY 2001 budget request for \$104.5 million for operating expenses, \$18.3 million for capital improvements to courthouse facilities, and \$41.8 for Defender Services in the District of Columbia Courts. My FY 2001 budget includes recommended funding levels of \$98.0 million for operations, \$5.0 million for capital improvements, and \$38.4 million for Defender Services. My transmittal of the District of Columbia Courts' budget request does not represent an endorsement of its contents.

This transmittal also includes information on grants and reimbursements forwarded by the Courts in response to the request in Conference Report H. Rept. 106-479.

I look forward to working with the Congress throughout the FY 2001 appropriation process.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 8, 2000.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Baron P. Hill in Bethesda, Maryland

May 8, 2000

Thank you. Well, I want to thank, first of all, Joe and Anne, for having us in their beautiful home on this beautiful spring night. And I want to thank Baron's colleagues Charlie Stenholm from Texas and Stenny Hoyer from Maryland for coming. They represent, I think, the future of the Democratic Party and where we have to go, and they've proved that you can get elected in places where sometimes we don't get elected. I also want to thank your predecessor, Lee Hamilton, for being here. He's one of the greatest House Members in my lifetime, and I thank him for what he is doing. And I want to thank, in his absence, Senator Bayh.

Evan met me at the door, and he said Susan was out of town, and he had two choices: He could stay and hear me give this speech, or he could go home and tuck his kids in bed. And I said, "You've heard the speech"—[laughter]—"and you'll never regret a minute you stay with your children." My daughter is about to be a senior in college, and I can still remember all the nights I tucked her in bed, and she can remember anything she ever did that I missed. [Laughter] Even though she can count them on one hand and have fingers left over, at 20 years old she can still remember. So he went home, as he should have. And since he's not here, I won't be embarrassing him when I tell you that I hope and expect some day I'll be voting for Evan Bayh for President of the United States.

I want to say just a few things, and I won't keep you long. I want to get out and say hello to the people I haven't seen yet. The country is in good shape, and I'm grateful for that.

And I'm grateful for the time I've had to serve and the opportunities we've had. And certainly not in my lifetime, and maybe never in the history of America, have we had at the same time such a strong economy with benefits more evenly distributed. We have inequality coming down in the last 2 years for the first time in over 20 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest single-parent poverty rate in 46 years.

We've got—the crime rate, we just said yesterday, has come down now 8 years in a row. We've got the lowest crime rate in over a quarter century, the lowest murder rate in 30 years. We have almost—the welfare rolls are about half the size they were when I took office. Things are moving in the right direction. Ninety percent of our children immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time.

I thank you for the applause you gave when Baron talked about the economy and our role in it. But what I would like to say is—people come up to me all the time and they say, "Well, thank you, and I wish you could run again." Half the country is probably elated that I can't, but it's nice when the people that say it, say it.

But here's what I want to say to you. A President is important. It's important to be able to articulate what you believe. It's important to be able to touch people where they live. It's important for people to think that the person in the Oval Office cares about them. It's important that you fight hard for the things you believe in.

But if you don't believe in the right things, you still won't get good results. That's why I'm here tonight. I like Baron Hill. I've liked him from the first time I met him. I admire him. But I think that the direction that we took—first our party and then our country, beginning in the '92 election—is profoundly important. And the major question before the American people this year is, what are we going to do with our good fortune? Yes, the surplus but, generally, what are we going to do with our good fortune?

And normally, the question asked in a campaign determines who wins. That is, what people think the election is about very often

determines the outcome of the election. And I believe with all my heart the answer to that question is not that we should indulge ourselves but that we should take on the big challenges and the big opportunities that are still out there. Because most of what I've had to do the last 7 years and some odd months is to try to turn the ship of state around and get us going in the right direction and, to use the metaphor I used in the '96 campaign, build our bridge to the 21st century.

Now the country has a chance that we've never had before to literally build the future of our dreams for our children. We almost had it in the 1960's, and it came apart over the combined impacts of the civil rights struggle and the Vietnam war and the divisions that ensued in the country and the collapse of the economic recovery of that decade.

So if the question is what are we going to do with the good times and the answer is take on the big challenges and the big opportunities, then the issue is, how? And I would argue that what we need to do is to continue to change based on what we call the New Democratic philosophy. We believe that you can be pro-business and pro-labor. We believe you can be pro-growth and pro-environment. We believe you can be pro-work and pro-family. We believe you can be pro-trade and pro-labor and human rights.

And I don't want to give a long speech about that, but I would like to cite two examples because they reflect Baron Hill's career, brief as it is, already distinguished in Congress. One is this trade issue. I believe that any fair reading of the record would say that I'm the most pro-labor President, at least since Lyndon Johnson. I believe that is fair. But my belief in trade is rooted in two things.

Number one, we've got 4 percent of the world's people and 22 percent of the world's income, and I don't think you have to be a rocket scientist to figure out if you want to keep over 20 percent of the world's income, you've got to sell something to the other 96 percent of the people. And you have responsibilities to them. You want them to do better, so you have to let them sell stuff to you.

Secondly, I think it's good for us in other ways. Imports—nobody ever talks about that,

but because we've had open markets, we've been able to grow without inflation. When I was elected President, after the election we had a big economic parlay down in Little Rock, and I had a private meeting in the Governor's Mansion, and I had Democratic economists—that is, they were more progressive; they wanted to believe we could have low unemployment without inflation.

So I said, "How low can unemployment get on a sustained basis without inflation?" And the consensus was 6 percent, maybe 5.8—you get below that, you're going to have inflation. It was 3.9 last month, with core inflation at 2.4 percent.

Now, if you want growth without inflation, you have to keep your markets open so there is some pressure on keeping the prices down. In a larger sense, because we're the most prosperous country in the world now, when we trade with others, it helps us to build friends and allies and promote democracy and stability and keep our kids from ever having to go to war again.

And that's really what this China issue is all about. A lot of you are here because you know that it's a lay down, economically, in the short run, because we don't have to give China any more access to our markets, and they give us lots of access to theirs. We can put up car dealerships there for the first time. We can sell American cars without having to let them manufacture them in China or transfer technology. We have all kinds of agricultural access we never had before.

But in a larger sense, what this is really about to me, having focused on the economy like a laser beam, is national security. Because China is the biggest country in the world, and in somewhere between 30 and 50 years, it'll have the biggest economy, unless India outstrips it, which is conceivable. And when that happens, are we going to have a working relationship with them, or is it going to be a new cold war?

Meanwhile, we want them to grow more open. I don't like the human rights abuses that exist there. But if we say no to them, we'll have no influence on their policies, because they think we're trying to stiff them. They'll get in the World Trade Organization anyway, but the Europeans will get all the trade benefits we negotiated and I fought for

a year for. And I think the chances that there will be trouble between China and Taiwan will go up exponentially if the United States says no. I've already had to send carrier groups to the Taiwan Straits once, and I don't want to do it again. I will if I have to, but I don't want to do it again.

If somebody were to ask—people are always asking me, "Now, what have you learned as President. What can you tell somebody else?" The one thing I learned about foreign policy is it's a lot more like real life than I thought it was. I mean, if you hear people talk about it, they always use these complicated words and all that. It's a lot more like real life. Nine times out of 10 you can get more with an outstretched hand than you can with a clenched fist, just like in real life. You never want to let your guard down, but you want to give people a chance to do the right thing, just like real life.

And this is a big issue. And he took a brave position, and I want to be here to support him for it. And a decade from now, if we prevail, we'll wonder why we had the debate. And if we don't, we'll still be paying the price.

One of the terrible things about public life is that sometimes you have to make tough decisions. I got so tickled—I read an article yesterday saying that I had real good approval ratings, and if it hadn't been for the bad approval ratings I had in '93 and '94, I'd have the highest average approval ratings of any President since they've been taking polls. And I thought, well—I showed it to Hillary and she said, "Sure, in '93 and '94 we made all the hard decisions that gave us the good approval ratings later." [Laughter]

You know, even in good economic times, life doesn't give you 100 percent easy decisions. So he's taking a tough decision. It's the right decision for America, and I respect it.

The second thing I want to mention is education, because education will be a big subject of debate, as it should be, in this election. And education has now become like God, motherhood, and apple pie. Everybody is for it. But we had a strategy, and Baron Hill has come in to support a very part of that. Our strategy was, set high standards, have accountability, identify schools that are failing, require them to turn around or shut down,

stop social promotion, but don't blame the kids for the failure of the system, give them the help they need to succeed.

And he's been especially active in promoting small, effective schools. I just want to tell you just two points about this and why it's so important.

The Republicans, from Governor Bush on down, they're going to say they're for education. And they're going to say a lot of good things. And he'll be able to cite some things that happened in Texas. But here's the problem with their proposal. Their tax cut is so big and their defense increases are even bigger than the ones I proposed, and if you put those two things with their voucher proposal, there won't be any money left to do what they say they're going to do in education. And somehow we've got to get that out to the American people.

The other point I want to make to you is this. When I became President, one of the things that frustrated me was a lot of people just didn't think things could get better. I mean, if I had run for President and I said, "Now, you vote for me, and sometime in my second term, instead of having a \$300 billion deficit we'll be paying down the debt," the voters would have said in '92, "He seems like such a nice young man, but he's slightly deranged. We better send him home." [*Laughter*]

When I leave office, we will have paid off \$355 billion of the national debt. So if I said to you, "Crime will go down every year in my administration," you would have said the same thing. If I said, "I'll cut the welfare rolls in half, or we will together," you would have said the same thing.

What's the point of this? We now know it can get better. What I want you to understand is that public education can get better. I've been working on this over 20 years now. And Hillary and I put through this big education reform program in 1983, and we thought we knew what we were doing. But I can tell you that we now know more than we have ever known. And I just want to cite three things that are important to our philosophy, in the education tour I took last week.

I went to St. Paul, Minnesota, to the Nation's first charter school. It's a public school with public funds set up outside the normal

bureaucratic rules of a school system so that it can serve a specific population or have a special mission. The first charter school in the country, in St. Paul, was the only one that existed when I started running for President promoting charter schools and nobody in America knew what I was talking about.

But I went to that school. There are over 100 kids in this high school. They all showed up. They were all kids that had not done well in other schools. A lot of them had had terrible, terrible problems in their personal lives, the kind of things that most of us would find it difficult to overcome. They're in school. There's no dropout rate. There's no violence in the school. There are no weapons in the school. The kids are learning; an extraordinary percentage of them are going on to college. It is working. And there are now 1,700 of those schools in America today. There are long waiting lists. Some of them have failed. But unlike other schools that have failed, they can be just shut down; you just revoke the charter.

And I'll give you just two other examples. I went to Columbus, Ohio. And Columbus has gotten 55 of our teachers under our 100,000 teachers program to lower class size in the early grades. They took class size from 24 to 15 in the first three grades. And I went to this very poor neighborhood, to this elementary school where in one year—one year—they went from 10 percent of their kids reading at or above grade level to 45 percent, from 10 percent of their kids doing math at or above grade level to 33 percent, from 10 percent of their kids doing science at or above grade level to 30 percent—in one year.

I went to Owensboro, Kentucky, where in 1996 Kentucky was one of the first States to implement the requirement we got the Congress to pass that anybody got Federal aid, the States, had to identify their failing schools. They identified 170. Within 2 years, 91 percent of them weren't failing anymore.

Now today, in this Owensboro school, in 3 years, here's what they did. They went from 12 percent of their kids reading at or above grade level to 57 percent, 5 percent doing math at or above grade level to 70 percent, 0 percent doing science at or above grade level to 64 percent. They're the 18th best

grade school in the State of Kentucky, and two-thirds of the kids are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Of the 20 grade schools in that State that scored highest on the test, 10 of them—10 of them—have kids where at least half of them are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Race and income and location are not destiny if you have good schools. That's what we believe. That's the second reason I'm here—because I think if our crowd stays in control of the education policy of this country, we will have further excellence.

And Al Gore has laid out an education plan that will enable us to hire more teachers—and there are going to be 700,000 retiring in the next few years, with the biggest student population we ever had—and have higher standards and put every kid who needs it in preschool and every child who needs it will have access to an after-school program and a summer school program.

That is worth fighting an election on. That is the whole history of the country. And what Americans must believe is, just like we got the deficit gone and we're paying down the debt, just like we have got the crime rate down, just like we have got the welfare rolls down, all of our schools can become excellent schools and all of our kids can learn. That's the second reason I'm here, and that's worth fighting this election on. That's what our party ought to be standing for.

So if somebody asks you why you came, say because the election ought to be fought out over what are we going to do with the good times. The answer is we're going to take on the big challenges. And the way to do it is to keep changing, based on the philosophy that has brought us to this point. And no person in the House of Representatives, in my judgment, better embodies that than Baron Hill.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee, and his wife, Anne; Senator Bayh's wife, Susan; former Representative Lee H. Hamilton; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks on Permanent Normal Trade Relations Status for China

May 9, 2000

Thank you very much, President Ford, President Carter, Mr. Vice President, Secretary Albright, Secretary Baker, Secretary Kissinger, all the distinguished people that the Vice President acknowledged. Many of you did not stand. We have so many distinguished leaders of Congress here. I would be remiss if I didn't thank our former Speaker, Tom Foley, and our former minority leader, Bob Michel, because they helped me pass NAFTA and the WTO, and I'm grateful to both of you. Thank you. We have former House Foreign Relations Chairman Lee Hamilton, former Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Chuck Percy.

There's one person in this room I have to introduce. I wish all of you could have been sitting where we were today, and I was scanning this room, realizing that through the lives of the people in this room, the last 50 years of America has unfolded. And we're a better country because of what you have all done, and it's a better world. And it is just profoundly humbling for me to look across this sea of faces who are here. I was so glad the Vice President said what he did about it. But there's one person here I want to recognize because I'm quite sure he is the senior statesman here, and through his life, most of the 20th century unfolded, former Ambassador and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield. Thank you, sir, for being here. Thank you.

You have already heard what needs to be said about this, so I'm going to try to abbreviate my remarks and focus on what is at issue here. If you look at the terms of this agreement on purely economic grounds, there's no question that Ambassador Barshefsky and Mr. Sperling did a great job. And if the Congress declines to approve this, I will not block China going into the WTO. So what will happen? The Europeans and the Japanese will get the benefits they negotiated under the rules.

If you look at who's against this in America, it is truly ironic to look at who's against this in China. Nobody's really talked about that. Not everybody's for this in China. Who's

against it in China? The people that run the state-owned industries and don't want to give up their control; the more conservative elements of the military, who would like to have greater tensions between ourselves and them, and between themselves and the people of Taiwan.

It is truly ironic, when you look at who's against this in China, to see that some of the most progressive people in the United States are basically doing what they want them to do in opposing this agreement. And for me, it is very painful. And I was very proud of the history that President Ford gave us, of the last 50 years, and very proud of what President Carter said about how we feel about labor rights and human rights and the labor movement here in this country.

But the people who are running China are not foolish people. They are highly intelligent. They know the decision they have made. They understand that they are unleashing forces of change which cannot be totally controlled in the system, which, as President Carter says, has dominated in China over the last 21 years since we normalized relations.

Two years ago there were only 2 million Internet users in China. Last year there were 9 million. This year there will be over 20 million. At some point, there will be a critical mass reached, and when that happens there will be a sea change.

When Martin Lee was here the other day talking to people about this, he said, "You know, I've led the democracy movement in Hong Kong for decades. I've never met Zhu Rongji. I can't even go to China. They won't let me go. But I'll tell you this, if you vote against this. The United States will have no influence on the human rights policies of the Chinese Government."

So why are we having this debate? Because people are anxiety-ridden about the forces of globalization, or they're frustrated over the human rights record of China, or they don't like all the procedures of the WTO. There are lots of things. Every one of you gets up every morning, there's something you don't like. That doesn't mean you should be against this agreement. But that's what has—this agreement has become like flypaper for the accumulated frustrations people have about

things in the world that they don't like very much or that are spinning beyond their control or that they feel will have an uncertain result. And that's the world we're living in.

But I will say this—you know, people ask me all the time, now that I've completed about over 90 percent of my term, well, what have you learned about this, that, or the other thing? What have you learned about foreign policy? I've learned it's a lot more like real life than I thought it was when I showed up here. I read all Dr. Kissinger's books, and I was immensely enlightened by them. But what he said today is right. Normally, unless you have to fight with somebody, you do better with an outstretched hand than with a clenched fist. You want to have a strong defense. You want to be ready for the worst, but you've got to try to plan for the best and give people a chance to do the right thing.

President Carter was talking about those 900,000 village elections. I went to some of those villages, and I met with some of those elected leaders. I think it would be a pretty good idea if they ran all of our campaign speeches back when we ran for reelection. [Laughter] Of course, I can say that since I'm not running anymore. [Laughter]

But I just have to say, this is an enormously impressive meeting. But the vote is going to take place at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, and it's by far the most important national security vote that will be cast this year. It's an American vote. It unites Henry Kissinger and Andy Young and Jesse Ventura—and not at a wrestling match. [Laughter]

I thank you for being here, sir. You didn't have to come today, and I really appreciate it.

But I will say this: We have got to tell people. You know, it doesn't matter what the local political pressure is, and it doesn't matter what your anxiety is. The truth is, if we vote for this, 10 years from now we will wonder why it was a hard fight. And if the Congress votes against it, they will be kicking themselves in the rear 10 years from now, because America will be paying the price. And I believe the price will start to be paid not 10 years from now, not even 10 months from now, but immediately. That's why the President-elect of Taiwan wants us so badly

to approve permanent normal trading relations. That's why most of the human rights activists do.

And yes, it's an economic issue, and you all know I'm interested in economics. And it's about as much of an economic laydown as I've ever seen, because what we're giving is China membership in the WTO in return for greater access to their markets, the right to sell things there without having to manufacture things there, the right to sell things there without having a transfer of technology.

It will help us, because then we'll at least have some demonstration of our good-faith commitment to the long-term decision they have made to try to be a more open society abiding by international rules of law. Then we'll at least have a way to continue this dialog and intensify it on religious rights, on political rights, on labor rights, on all human rights issues, on the environment, on missile and other technology proliferation, all these defense issues which have brought the former Chiefs of Staff and the former Defense Secretaries here and the former National Security Advisers here today.

So what I would like to ask all of you to do when you leave here is to pick somebody you know in the Congress and call them and tell them what we're all saying to one another today. Of course we want the voice of this meeting to echo across the country and to embrace the Congress.

I wish it weren't a fight, but it is. And I'd just like to say one thing in closing. If you look at the whole sweep of American history, at critical periods, we've always been willing to redefine our responsibilities as a nation: First in ways that brought us together as a people, in the 19th century, and then all the way through the Great Depression and, later, through the civil rights revolution and the women's rights movement and the environmental movement; and second, in ways that recognized our unique responsibilities first to our neighbors and then to those across the globe as we became more and more blessed.

One of the things I was thinking about in terms of our relationship with China is that President Nixon and President Carter and President Ford and even President Bush, for whose support we're very grateful for, they all faced a different world than we face here

today. And frankly, they faced different challenges at home when they were making these tough decisions abroad.

We haven't been in this kind of economic and social shape in America since the early 1960's. If we can't do this now, when in the wide world will be ever be able to do it? Why—what could we possibly be afraid of, based on the capacity of this country to grow its economy and improve its social condition? If we can't meet this kind of a challenge now, we are abandoning the legacy of the last 50 years, when previous Presidents and previous Congresses have done things harder to do than this in economic and social turbulence far greater than we face today.

In fact, I almost think that these good times are some sort of a disability here because they encourage people to lose their focus, to lose their concentration, to sort of drift off and assume that there are no consequences to decisions that are not responsible. There are always consequences.

And this country has never had a better chance to shape the world of the future for our children. We all know it's the right decision. And virtually 100 percent of the people at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue know it's the right decision. We cannot allow our prosperity to lull us into self-indulgence.

We have to use our prosperity to build the 21st century world that many of you fought in World War II for, Senator Mansfield fought in World War I for, that you served in the Government for, that you gave your lives to public service for, that you sustained our standard for freedom throughout the cold war for, that you supported all these other trade opening measures for.

And if we can't do it with the lowest unemployment in 30 years and 21 million new jobs and the longest expansion in history, we'll never be able to explain it to our children and our grandchildren, and this place will not be nearly as happy a place to be for the next several years. But if we do it, one more time we will say, we kept faith in our time with America's eternal march.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee; Prime Minister Zhu Rongji of

China; former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young; Gov. Jesse Ventura of Minnesota; President-elect Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan; and former Senator Michael J. Mansfield. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and James A. Baker III, former Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, and Vice President Al Gore.

Statement on Protection of Forest Roadless Areas

May 9, 2000

The plan proposed today by Secretary Glickman to prohibit road building in roadless areas of our national forests is an important step toward my goal of lasting protection for these priceless lands. These pristine areas are some of the last wild places in America, and I am firmly committed to preserving them for future generations. I commend the Forest Service for its extraordinary effort in developing this proposal and providing the American people with every opportunity to help shape it. I encourage members of the public and all those with a stake in the future of our national forests to carefully review this proposal and make their voices heard as the Forest Service continues to develop and refine this historic initiative.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Health Care Legislation

May 9, 2000

I am extremely pleased that today the House passed H.R. 4386, the "Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act," in an overwhelming bipartisan vote. Each year thousands of women who have been diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer do not receive the comprehensive coverage they need, despite extraordinary efforts by Federal health programs to provide that care. This legisla-

tion, which I was proud to include in this year's budget, will provide States with the option to provide the full Medicaid benefit package without delay to uninsured women diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer through Federal screening programs.

I also want to commend the Congress for today's strong bipartisan vote in support of the "Long Term Care Security Act." This legislation, which I have long advocated, provides authorization for the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program to offer long-term care insurance to current and retired Federal employees. I hope that the legislation serves as a model for all private employers and encourages them to provide this type of coverage to their employees. While this is an important step, it is only one step. We must also continue to work to pass a broad range of long-term care initiatives, including a \$3,000 tax credit for people with long-term care needs or their caregivers; new funding for services which support family caregivers of older persons; and efforts to enable States to improve equity in Medicaid eligibility for people in home- and community-based settings.

I am encouraged by the news of Congress acting on these significant policy initiatives. We need to build on these achievements and act now to pass a range of policies of importance to the American people, including the creation of a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights and a new voluntary prescription drug benefit option as we take steps to modernize and strengthen the Medicare program. And finally, we must redouble our efforts to expand high quality, affordable coverage for all Americans. I urge the Congress to work towards passing the administration's health coverage proposals that would expand coverage to at least 5 million uninsured Americans and provide health services to millions more by providing new, affordable health insurance options for parents, 19- to 20-year-olds, legal immigrants, workers between jobs, and the near elderly.

Memorandum on Delegation of Authority

May 9, 2000

Memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence

Subject: Delegation of Authority for Submission of Report Under Section 3151 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106–65)

By the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, I hereby delegate to the Director of Central Intelligence the responsibility of the President to submit annual reports under section 3151 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106–65). You are authorized to re-delegate this responsibility consistent with applicable law.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Remarks on Presenting the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the United States Air Force Academy Falcons

May 9, 2000

Thank you. Please be seated. We're delighted to be joined today by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Rudy de Leon, by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Shelton. You may have seen in the movie that I sunk his battleship, but so far he's got all his planes. *[Laughter]* So he's welcome here at the Air Force celebration. General Handy, welcome. And a special word of welcome to the Superintendent of the Air Force Academy, Lieutenant General Oelstrom, and to Coach DeBerry and to all the members of the Falcons football team and the other friends of the Air Force who are here today.

We are celebrating something that has never happened before. This is the first time we will award the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the Air Force Academy in the 21st century. *[Laughter]*

In the last century, by my count, there were four great sports dynasties. From 1947

to 1958, the Yankees won 9 of 12 World Series. I actually saw the last few of those, when we got a television. From 1957 to 1969, the Celtics won 11 of 13 titles in the NBA. From 1964 to 1975, UCLA won the NCAA basketball championship 10 of 12 times. Now the Falcons have won the Commander in Chief's Trophy 9 of the last 11 times.

You know, I try to be completely neutral in these things, but the Army really was hurt that you beat them this year with a better ground game. *[Laughter]*

I want to say also, Coach DeBerry really knows how to hurt a guy. I said, "You know, you've been here 7 of the 8 years I've been President." He said, "That's right, and I look forward to being here next year. I'm not term-limited." *[Laughter]* And I'm glad you're not term-limited.

We celebrate today, of course, formally the presentation of the Commander in Chief's Trophy. It is recognition of athletic success. But the truly remarkable thing is that these young men, year-in and year-out, win athletic success while recognizing it is not the most important part of their lives. They are trained academically. They are trained militarily. They are trained to develop good character and good citizenship and to be good people and representatives of the United States of America. And still, year-in and year-out, they play well; they win a lot; they play as a team. And it must be immensely encouraging to every American, as it is to me as Commander in Chief, to know that they will be representing our country as an important part of our national defense in the years ahead.

To all of you who have had anything to do with their success, I thank you. To all of you who teach at the Air Force Academy, who coach, or who otherwise support these young people who have made such an important commitment to excellence and to service, I thank you.

And I want to again say I won't be here next year, but I expect you will be. *[Laughter]* I hope you will remember that I have been honored to see the Air Force Academy here 7 of these 8 years, that you have earned every appearance. And I hope you will take with you into life the values that brought you to this place today.

Thank you very much.

Now, I would like to ask the Superintendent to come up for remarks, and then we'll have the coach say a thing or two.

General, it's good to see you again.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:30 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Tad J. Oelstrom, USAF, Superintendent, and Fisher DeBerry, football coach, U.S. Air Force Academy.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Mary L. Landrieu

May 9, 2000

I think that young is a relative term. [Laughter] I've decided that young is anybody today younger than I am. [Laughter]

Let me say, I want to thank Jim and Ann for having us in their beautiful, beautiful home. I love this place. I always love to come here. And I want to thank Mary and Frank and little Connor, who I knew even before he was here. And I want to thank all of you for being here for Mary. A lot of you must feel old, you come—you do all these things over and over again. So I thank you on behalf of Senator Landrieu and Senator Daschle and Senator Lieberman and Senator Breaux and Senator Lincoln and Senator Edwards. And Congressman Jefferson, thank you for being there for us.

I can't help but tell you, we did this great event for China today, where President Ford and President Carter came, and Henry Kissinger came. And he always sounds like God with a German accent. [Laughter] Maybe God has a German accent, for all I know. [Laughter] And Jim Baker—and they all gave great talks. And we talked, and I looked out there, and I realized that there are all these former Secretaries of State, Secretaries of the Treasury, National Security Advisers, chairmen of the Foreign Relations Committee of the House and Senate, Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It was the most—Trade Ambassadors—the most astonishing group of Americans.

And Gerald Ford got up and started talking about a vote he cast in 1949 for trade with China that was joined in by John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Carl Albert, and Albert Gore, Sr. And I realized that I was

there with people that represented the last 50 years of American history. And then I realized there was one person there that represented the whole 20th century, Mike Mansfield, who is 97 or 98 now. Didn't tell the truth about his age when he was 15 and talked his way into the Marines in World War I. And then he came home and studied Asian-Pacific affairs, became a professor at Montana, became a Congressman, a Senator, President Kennedy's Senate majority leader, a post he held for about 14 years, I think, a long time anyway. Then President Carter appointed him Ambassador to Japan.

And when Mary said I was young, it reminded me of a story. Shortly after I became President, when my mentor, Senator Fullbright, was still alive—he was 87 and Mike Mansfield was 91, and they had lunch together one day. And the next day Senator Fullbright came to see me. He was hitting us all up at the time, and he was still in great shape then. And Mike Mansfield looked at him and said, "Now, Bill, how old are you again?" He said, "I'm 87." And Mansfield said, "Oh, to be 87 again." [Laughter] So this youth, you know, it's a relative thing.

I will be very brief. First of all, I first met Mary Landrieu when she was a very young State representative. And I was a young Governor, and neither one of us looked our age. And she still looks younger than she is, and I now look more than my age. [Laughter] But I thought she was great when I first met her. I always loved her daddy, from the time I worked with President Carter and his administration when I was Attorney General in my home State. And I've known her a long time. And I thought when she ran for the Senate that if she could be elected, she would be uncommonly effective.

Senator Breaux worked hard for her; Congressman Jefferson did; Mayor Morial of New Orleans did; and I certainly did. And it all worked out pretty well, and she has exceeded even my very high expectations.

I think sometime in the next day or two, the House of Representatives is going to pass a House version of this bill that she and others have been working on for a long time, to create a permanent conservation fund that could literally change the face of hundreds

of American communities and give us a permanent conservation legacy in America, the likes of which we have never had before. That's quite an achievement for a first-term Senator. Now, we have to do it, but—[*ap-
plause*].

She is also, as you heard, supporting the administration's initiative to get permanent normal trade relations with China. And we had that meeting today, and there's no point in me repeating what Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter and all the others said, but I will tell you this. This is the most important national security vote we will make this year.

A lot of you here agree with this issue because you understand the economics of it. And as I pointed out today, most of the people who are against this are against it out of their frustration or their anxiety about globalization, generally, or their frustration because China keeps doing things they don't like in human rights, or they don't like the way the World Trade Organization operates or some other reason. It has nothing to do with whether or not this is or is not in our economic interests or our national security interests.

But this is an easy vote for a Democrat to say no to. And that's another reason I'm here, because Mary Landrieu says yes, because it is a significantly important vote. And we will be paying the price for a decade if we fail to adopt this. And we could start paying the price within a matter of months. It is a profoundly important issue to the world that our children and grandchildren will live in. And so I'm here for that reason.

And the third thing I want to say is that Mary and a lot of her colleagues have supported our efforts to raise education standards. One of the things that bothered me when I ran for President was that people, even people who were supporting me, they wanted to vote for change. They thought I had a lot of energy, but a lot of them, frankly, didn't believe we'd make any difference. They had been so disappointed for so long and heard so much political hot air that they didn't think we could make a difference. They didn't think things could be better.

And—welcome, Senate Robb. Thank you for being here. You'll forgive me for being impertinent. If you hadn't given him a con-

tribution, I hope you'll give him one, too. [*Laughter*] If ever a person deserved to be reelected, he does. And he's going to be, and you might as well help him because he needs your help.

Well, anyway, the thing that bothered me, even in my campaign there were people who thought, well, I like old Clinton's ideas, but you know, we can't really turn this deficit around or make much of a difference in the economy or reduce the welfare rolls or—you know, I heard it all.

And now, you know what's happened. We've gone from deficit to surplus. When I leave office, we will have paid off \$355 billion of the national debt. And I'm very proud of that. And we'll have the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment in over 30 years, but also the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment in 40 years, welfare rolls half the size they were when I took office, and 8 years of declining crime.

Now, what's the point here? We don't have an excuse not to do our best anymore, because we know that our common challenges are like all other problems: They do yield to intelligent effort.

And the reason education is so important—I took this education tour last week, and I don't want to bore you with the whole thing, but I'll just give you three examples. I went to the first charter school in the country, which is a public school set up outside the normal rules and regulations to serve a specific population or to pursue a specific education mission. And if they do well, they can stay in business. If they're not, they're supposed to have their charter jerked. That's the whole idea, that they're super accountable.

Now, they haven't all worked well. We've had problems with one or two here. But you should know that when I ran for President, there was one; today there are 1,700. Mary's voted to help me create more. Overall, they've done better than average schools, and they're vastly oversubscribed. People want to get into them.

And I visited this school in St. Paul, Minnesota, where there are over 100 kids who

have had terrible problems in their lives, terrible problems in school. They were all in school. None of them were dropping out. There were no violence problems, no drug problems, no nothing. They were showing up every day and learning, and they felt like they had a home. And they were performing at a high level.

I went to Columbus, Ohio, to a school in a very poor neighborhood, where they—in Columbus, they've got 55 of these 100,000 teachers we got out. And we've been attacked by the Republicans. We got attacked by their nominee for President. They say we're trying to micromanage the school system. The people met me, everybody from the superintendent on down, to thank me for the fact that we were giving them teachers and the money had to go for teachers in the early grades. They've gone from 25 average class size down to 15.

And in this one school, in a very poor neighborhood, in one year they went from 10 percent of the kids reading at or above grade level to 45 percent, 10 percent of the kids doing math at or about grade level to 33 percent, 10 percent of the kids doing science at or above grade level to 30 percent—in one year. And they have two of those teachers.

And then I went to Owensboro, Kentucky. Four years ago the Congress required the States—first we required the States to set up school standards. Then we required the States to identify schools that weren't making it and to come up with a strategy to fix them. Kentucky got out there early. Four years ago they identified 170 failing schools. Within 2 years, 91 percent were off the failure list.

This school I visited had two-thirds of its children eligible for the free or reduced school lunch program. And they had one of those teachers we required to lower class size in the early grades. Listen to this. In 4 years, here's what they did—two-thirds of the kids on free or reduced lunch. They went from 12 percent to 57 percent reading at or above grade level. They went from 5 percent to 70 percent doing math at or above grade level. They went from 0 to 64 percent doing science at or above grade level. They ranked 18th in the entire State of Kentucky in academic achievement. Ten of the 20 best grade

schools in Kentucky now have over half the kids eligible for free or reduced lunch. Race and income are not destiny. And we can also turn the schools around and give everybody excellence in education in this country. And that's another thing that brought me here tonight.

Now, this is the last thing I want to say. You want to know how this Presidential election is going to come out, how these races for the Senate and House are going to come out? It depends upon what people think the election is about. Whatever they decide the question is will determine the answer.

What do you think it's about? You don't remember anything else I say, you remember this. I think it should be about, what are we going to do with this moment of promise? I think the answer to the question should be: We're going to meet the big challenges and seize the big opportunities. How are we going to do it? We're going to do it not by doing just what I've done but by changing in the direction we're moving and not taking a U-turn on economic policy, on education policy, on any of these other policies.

So what do you think the election is about? Do you really believe it's about making the most of this moment? What does that mean? It means taking on the big challenges and opportunities. How should we do it? We ought to keep changing in the direction that brought us here.

Now if people believe that, then Al Gore will be elected President. We'll pick up seats in the Senate. We'll win the House back. And within no time at all, the Democrats will be rewarded by the American people for the good governance they have brought. That is really the issue.

But to do it, we have to keep meeting the challenges every day. We can't duck the hard votes, like this China vote. We've got to show up, be counted, and deliver for the American people.

I hope you will share this with people. Somebody asks you why you came here tonight, tell them you love Mary Landrieu, just like I do; you think she's done a great job; but you don't want to see America blow the most terrific opportunity we have had in my lifetime to prove we can build the future of

our dreams for our children. And we've got to have people like her to do it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:45 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts James and Ann Free; Senator Landrieu's husband, Frank Snellings, and their son, Connor; former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and James A. Baker III; Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans, LA; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Daniel K. Akaka

May 9, 2000

The President. Well, thank you very much. Aloha.

Audience members. Aloha!

The President. And to Danny and Millie and all of you, thank you so much for having me here. Senator Daschle, thank you for being here. And I'd like to acknowledge our great friend, a former Member of the House of Representatives, Norm Mineta. Thank you for coming, Norm, and being here with your friends and your extended family.

I want to tell you that I'm here for two reasons tonight, besides the fact that I've never had a bad day in Hawaii. [Laughter] And I knew that if I came here tonight, Danny would do as much as he could to simulate Hawaii. You know I would have music. I'd have a lei. People would say "aloha." Everybody would be relaxed. And by the time I left, no matter what I was worried about, I'd be in a good mood. And sure enough, that's happened.

The second reason I'm here is in behalf of one of the finest people in the United States Senate and one of the most popular people in the entire Congress. Dan Akaka is not only a good Senator, he is a good man. And I have yet to meet the first human being who didn't love him who knew him. And I want to thank him for being my friend.

The third reason I'm here is because he asked me, and I owe him. [Laughter]

You know, there was this—you heard, Senator Daschle said all those nice things about my service as President—there was a really funny article—I was reading Hillary this arti-

cle—you know, when you think you're about to get good press, read it to your spouse, and they'll find a way to bring it down. [Laughter] So I said, "Look here, here's this article. It says I have really high job approval ratings. And if it weren't for '93 and '94, they'd be the highest average ratings since people have been taking polls." And Hillary said, "Well, of course. In '93 and '94 you made all the hard decisions that gave you the high job approval ratings in '95 and afterward."

And if you think about it—I said it in a casual way, I'm serious—in 1993, when I presented an economic plan to cut the deficit in half and to get this country moving again and get interest rates down, we didn't get a single vote from the other party. They all said that it was going to throw the country into recession. And if anybody—anybody—in our party in either House had changed their vote, it would have been defeated. We would not have enjoyed the economic recovery we have had, and I would not have enjoyed the political recovery I enjoyed after 1994.

But the most important thing is, the American people now have the longest economic expansion in history, over 21 million new jobs, unemployment rate under 4 percent for the first time since early 1970. And when I leave office, we will have paid off—paid off—\$355 billion of the national debt in the last 3 years. Now, all because he was there. We lose one vote, and it's history. The whole last 8 years are a totally different story.

It was almost the same when we had to pass the crime bill to do more to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals, put more police officers on the street. You probably saw the report Sunday, crime down 8 years in a row—and the leadership of the other party overwhelmingly negative on the Brady bill, on banning the cop-killer bullets, on the assault weapons ban, on putting 100,000 police on the streets, all of those things. He was there.

And in education, I just want to say, you know, that's a story that is not as well-known, college-going up 10 percent, reading and math scores almost up a full grade level. But in the areas where people have taken seriously the legislation that I proposed 4 years ago, that every State had to identify every

school which was not performing well, where the schools were not teaching the children to learn, and come up with strategies to turn them around, we're seeing breathtaking gains.

I just got back from Kentucky—I'll just give you one example. I was in this little town in western Kentucky, where your former colleague Wendell Ford was born and grew up, and he was there to be with me—Owensboro, Kentucky. Two-thirds of the children on free and reduced lunches; 1996 we passed—the Democrats did—a requirement that States identify schools that are failing and come up with strategies to turn them around or shut them down. To stop social promotion, which we didn't require, but we supported, we also have gone from nothing to \$50 million for after-school and summer school programs, to help so we don't brand children failures when the system fails them.

Okay, so I show up in this little town in western Kentucky where the local grade school has just been named the 18th best grade school in the State, and they were a failing school 4 years ago. Now, here's what you need to know: Two-thirds of the kids in that school are eligible for free or reduced school lunches—two-thirds. Of the 20 best elementary schools in Kentucky, 10 of them have over half of their kids eligible for free or reduced school lunch.

Race, ethnicity, income, and location are not destiny if we can give all of our children a world-class education. And the role we played in that would not have been possible if it hadn't been for the supporters I had in our party and the Congress, including Senator Akaka. So I'm proud to be here tonight for him.

Now, last and most important, elections are always about tomorrow, always about the future. So if someone asks you why you came here tonight, besides bragging on Danny Akaka as a human being and talking about what a great record he built, how much you appreciate the fact that he helped me, I hope you will say something like this: This is the first time maybe ever our country has had such a great opportunity because of our economic strength and social progress and our role in creating a more peaceful world, that

we've had the opportunity to build the future of our dreams for our children.

The real question in this election is, what are we going to do with all this prosperity? What's the answer to that question? Do you believe that's the question? And if you believe that's the question, what's your answer?

Audience member. Al Gore!

The President. I'm coming to that. [Laughter]

But this is very important. You know, I'm not running for anything, but I know a little something about elections. And normally, the candidate who wins is the product of what the voters believe the election is about. If you ask the right question, it will lead you to the right answer.

So what's this election about? This election is about, what are we going to do with all these good things that have happened in the last 7 years? I think the answer is, what we're going to do—I know what I think it should be—it should be, we're going to take advantage of it to build the future of our dreams. We're going to take our big opportunities. We're going to take our big challenges. We're going to bring economic opportunity to people in places left behind. We're going to give all our kids a world-class education and get rid of child poverty. We're going to do more to help people balance work and family. We're going to prove that you can meet the challenges of the environment and still grow the economy. We're going to deal with the aging of America and save Social Security and Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit. We're going to build one America. We're going to pass that hate crimes bill, and we're going to pass the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act," and we're going to continue to fight against racial and ethnic and religious and other discrimination, until we pull this country together.

That's what I think we ought to do. And we're going to keep the economy going, and we're going to keep going until we get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835. These are big things, you know, big things we've never been able to do before.

Now, if you believe that's what this election is about, then the next question is, how are you going to do it? Well, you have two

choices. You can continue to change, building on what has brought us to this point, or you can abandon it and go back to the political philosophy that governed before we started in 1993.

And that's what Danny Akaka's race is about. That's what the race for President is all about. Do you want an economic strategy that gives us a tax cut we can afford and still gives us enough money to pay down the debt, save Social Security and Medicare, and invest in the education of our children? I do. But if you prefer, you can have a tax cut and a defense increase and education vouchers that takes us back to deficit spending, doesn't give us money to invest in education, but makes everybody real happy in the short run because they'll be rolling in dough.

Now, we tried it their way. We tried it our way. You have evidence. Now you have to choose. Which way are you going to try going forward? The same thing is true with education. The same thing is true with health care. The same thing is true with the environment.

And so I say to all of you, I'm glad you're here. I'm glad you're helping Dan Akaka. He is as fine a man as I've ever known in public life. And he's always good to me when we play golf together. *[Laughter]* But I'm telling you, this is a big election. I'm not running, but I can tell you it's just every bit as important as the one we made in '92 and the one we made in '96, because this will determine whether the American people are going to embrace what works or say, "Okay, we tried it for 8 years, and it was nice, but I think we'll go back and try something else." And the something else was what they tried before, but it was so long ago, everybody has forgotten.

That is what this is about. This gentleman here said, "You ought to tell people that the slogan of this election ought to be: 'Before You Go Back, Think Back,' " which is better than anything I've thought of. *[Laughter]* But the reason I want the Vice President to win is because I know what a role he's played in the last 8 years, and I know he understands the future, and he knows how to lead us there.

The reason I think Dan Akaka should be reelected is, I know how much he loves the

ordinary people that he represents and because every single time his country needed him he was there—every time. Not one time did he ever take a dive and walk away when we were trying to build this future.

And so I ask all of you to think about that. I thank you for helping him. And I want you to go out between now and November and tell people why you are doing this. Tell them there may not be another time in our lifetime when we can do this. Tell them there are places and people that are still left behind, including a lot of people in Hawaii because of the Asian financial crisis, who didn't fully participate in this economic recovery. And tell them you want a change, but you'd like to keep moving in the direction that we've enjoyed for the last several years.

One good way you can do that is by making sure that he gets as near to 100 percent of the vote as possible.

Come on up here, Senator Akaka.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 p.m. in the John Hay Room at the Hay Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Akaka's wife, Mary Mildred (Millie); and former Senator Wendell H. Ford.

Videotape Remarks to the White House News Photographers' Association Dinner

May 10, 2000

Good evening. I'm sorry I can't be with you tonight, but I'm glad to join you in this way, as the members of the White House News Photographers' Association celebrate your annual dinner. I extend my congratulations to this evening's award winners.

For a long time now, I've been an admirer of your work, and in more recent years, I've even been a subject of it. From here on the other side of the lens, I want to tell you how much I appreciate your skill and your dedication. Each and every day, you bring the world of Washington into sharper focus for the world outside Washington. Taking on some of the toughest assignments in journalism, you turn them into images that endure, images that help define our times and the way that we will remember them far into the future.

I want to mention one family that's been making this kind of contribution for half a century now, the McNamees. Wally McNamee was first named Photographer of the Year back when President Eisenhower was in the White House. Along the way, he's been honored more than any member in the history of the association. Wally, congratulations on tonight's award. It really has been a "lifetime of achievement."

Of course, one of the greatest honors any parent could ever receive is when a child chooses to follow in his footsteps. Tonight Wally's son, Win, carries on a McNamee family tradition by taking first place in my favorite category of photography, Presidential.

I want to extend my congratulations to all the photographers and cameramen who are being honored tonight, and make special mention of another very special award winner, Sharon Farmer. My first day on the job was her first day, and I've been honored to have her by my side, literally, ever since. I am lucky to have Sharon as a friend, and every bit as lucky to have her as my Director of White House Photography—the first woman and the first African-American ever to hold that post. Sharon Farmer is making history even as she records it.

Sharon, I thank you. We all know that with or without a camera, you're a straight shooter. I can't tell you how much I appreciate that. And I'm proud to join your peers tonight in bestowing the recognition you never seek but richly deserve.

Again, congratulations to all tonight's winners and to the association for your fine work and many achievements.

Thank you, and good night.

NOTE: These remarks were videotaped at approximately 6 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House on April 25 for broadcast at the dinner on May 6. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 10. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

May 10, 2000

The President Well, good morning. Please be seated. I'm sorry you had to stand up so long, but that's the fastest one group of politicians ever walked through another group. [Laughter] I'm delighted to see you all here. I want to thank Senator Daschle and Senator Gephardt and their colleagues, Secretary Shalala, the Older Women's League,* those who represent the aging-disability consumer, and other health advocates who are here. I want to thank Betty Dizik, who will talk in a moment to explain what this is really all about.

We are here together today to announce the support of the Democratic caucus in the Senate and the House for legislation to provide affordable prescription drug coverage for every older American. For our seniors, prescription drugs are not a luxury; they can mean the difference between life and death, between years of anguish and years of fulfillment. At this time of historic prosperity and strength, there is absolutely no reason that we should force seniors to make a choice between their health and their food or their daily existence.

I am profoundly grateful to Congressman Gephardt and Senator Daschle and their colleagues for developing an approach that the Democrats can rally behind. In a few moments, I will ask them to share the details of the efforts we will make together. But we all know we can't achieve our efforts without bipartisan support in the Congress. That's why, just as we are trying to do with the Patients' Bill of Rights, we want to reach across the aisle to encourage Republican support, as well.

This can and should be a truly bipartisan effort. But I want to make it clear first why America's seniors and people with disabilities cannot afford to wait any longer for prescription drug coverage.

* White House correction.

Today, more than three in five older Americans lack affordable and dependable prescription drug coverage. The burden is getting worse. According to Families USA, the price of prescription drugs most often used by seniors has risen at double the rate of inflation for 6 years in a row now.

Two groups in particular bear a tremendous burden, rural Americans and women. As Senator Daschle knows so well, people in rural areas are much less likely to secure prescription drug coverage. According to a study released today by the Older Women's League, almost 8 out of 10 women on Medicare use prescription drugs regularly, and most of them pay for these medications out of pocket. In total, women spend 13 percent more than men do for prescription drugs, in spite of the fact that on average, their incomes are 40 percent lower.

America's seniors, men and women, deserve better. No one should be forced to take a bus trip to Canada to get medicines made in the U.S. at a lower price. We desperately need a comprehensive plan to provide a prescription drug benefit that is optional, affordable, accessible to all, based on competition, not price controls, to boost seniors' bargaining power to get the best possible price, and one that addresses the devastating burden of catastrophic coverage.

We will have in our budget, especially with the improved economy, the funds to deal with catastrophic coverage as well, and we absolutely should do that.

The budget I have presented to Congress will continue our efforts to pay down the debt and pay it off by 2013, will be able to provide protection against catastrophic costs, and will provide voluntary prescription drug coverage to all Americans.

Adding the voluntary prescription drug coverage to Medicare is the smart and the right thing to do. I will say this one more time. We would never think of creating Medicare today without it, and it is high time we fixed it.

Now, let me say without getting into a fight over the legislation that's been proposed, I don't think it's enough to stop at \$15,000 income limit to give help on prescription drugs. Half the people who need the help fall within the income limits of \$15,000 to \$50,000. I

don't think we should write a plan that basically is designed to please the people who are selling the drugs instead of the people who are buying the drugs.

And as long as we are trying to make the price competition system work and give bargaining power to seniors, we ought to do this right and cover the people who need it. This is not about winning a political fight. It's about giving people a chance to fight for a good long life.

And I want to introduce now Betty Dizik, someone who know firsthand the enormous burdens of prescription drugs. She's had to make some very hard choices in order to afford the drugs that she desperately needs, and she is exhibit A for why we are all here today.

Betty, come on up here and tell us your story. Give her a hand. *[Applause]*

Thank you.

[At this point, Ms. Dizik, Senator Thomas A. Daschle, and Representative Richard A. Gephardt made brief remarks.]

The President. Thanks to Congressman Gephardt's consideration, none of you will have to spend your hard-earned money to buy prescription drugs to treat your cold that you got from being flooded out here. *[Laughter]* But let me thank you, Betty, thank you, Secretary Shalala, and thank all the Members of Congress. Look at our legislation. We need some Republican support. This is a good bill. It will make a big difference.

Thank you, and bless you all. Get in here before you get wet.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Medicare recipient Betty Dizik.

Remarks to the National Conference on Building Prosperity in the Delta in Arlington, Virginia

May 10, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you. Good afternoon, and welcome. Thank you for coming here to meet. I know that we're having a reception over at the White House later this evening; I hope all of you will come, and I look forward to seeing you all there, as well.

I want to begin by thanking Conn Davis for his introduction. He's an impressive young man. In addition to going to Boys Nation, you might be interested to know that he's a football standout and Eagle Scout, and from my point of view, most important, he plays trombone in his school's jazz band. [Laughter]

I also want to thank all the members of our administration who have been part of this. And I can't mention them all, but I especially should note, of course, Secretary Slater is from the Delta, from Lee County, in Arkansas; Bill Ferris, the head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, from Mississippi; our FCC Chairman, Bill Kennard; our Office of Personnel Management Director, Janice Lachance, is here. I thank all of them and the others who are helping me with the Delta, as well as all the people on the White House staff who have worked so hard on this, Lynn Cutler, Lisa Kountoupes, and many others.

Governor Musgrove, we're glad to see you here. Thank you for coming, sir. And we appreciate your leadership, and we're glad to see you down there. I thank Mayor Herenton from Memphis. You know, when I was a boy, we used to go over to the Delta, and everybody who lived east of Little Rock would say that they were not from Arkansas. They lived in the State of Delta, and Memphis was its capital. So I'm glad to see you here, sir. Thank you very much.

I want to thank my Arkansas Congressman from the Delta, Marion Berry. I think he's still here. And if any of you had any idea how many hours he and Senator Blanche Lambert Lincoln have spent literally haranguing me about the entire Delta, not just Arkansas, you would all supplement their salaries generously. They have been wonderful. I want to thank Marion Berry and Blanche Lincoln for what they have done.

Lieutenant Governor Wood, we're glad to have you here. My old friend Jess White, we've been working on these issues for more than 15 years together. And I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to a former Delta Congressman, Mike Espy, who's here—I think, plainly, one of the two or three best Agriculture Secretaries this country has

ever had. And I really thank you very much for being here.

I won't go into this in great detail today, but I'm going to have in the next few months some further proposals on agriculture, which I think are important. We should not forget the agriculture component of the Delta's future and the fact that as I warned when it passed, the last farm bill we passed basically is bad for family farmers except when prices are high. When prices are high, everybody's getting along all right. We need to do better in the next farm bill and with agricultural policy to recognize the unique characteristics of the family farm structure that, thank goodness, is still alive in most of the Delta, and we need to do what we can to preserve it.

So I thank you, Mike Espy. And all the farmers that are here, I thank you, and I hope that we will remember that.

Finally, just by way of introduction, I would like to say a special word of appreciation to all of the business leaders who are here, large and small. And if I might, I'd like to say one special word of appreciation to Wayne Leonard and the folks at Entergy. They have been really devoted to this whole idea of our new market strategy and rebuilding the Delta. And I've had I don't know how many people who have told me in the last couple of months that they've had meetings with Wayne or various Entergy executives who have said, "Well, here's what our company's into. Now, let's get past that and let me talk to you about what I really want to talk to you about, which is rebuilding the Delta."

So, for all of you in the private sector that have that kind of commitment—obviously, most of this will be done with and through you, and I thank you all very, very much.

Those of you whom I have had the privilege to know in Arkansas over the last several decades, some of you all my life—there's my State Senator out there, Bud Canada; thank you for being here—and those of you with whom I worked on the Delta Development Commission or on the Southern Growth Policies Board know that this is more than a political issue to me, even more than a public policy problem. I've been interested in the people and the problems and the promise of the Delta for 40 years.

You know, I loved music when I was a child. I was 15 years old when I first went to New Orleans. I still remember everything I did. The first place I ever went where hamburgers cost more than a dollar—I was horrified. [Laughter] I still remember going to Preservation Hall and sitting there as a 15-year-old boy for 4 or 5 hours listening to these old guys play music that I would kill to be able to play like. I still remember everything about it. I still remember how the Delta looked and the bends in the river.

And I still remember when I was in college—I used to take several days off when I was in college, either during Christmas or summer vacation, just to drive over to the Delta and wander around—just me, alone. I'd get up on the levee and ride up and down and go into these little old towns along the Delta and talk to people, just trying to get a sense of the pulse of the place.

And I still remember some of the things that weren't very good, too. I remember the—it was in the Delta that I last saw segregated restrooms marked out. And I remember when we made our campaign come back in 1982, and I ran for Governor with the help of Rodney Slater and my friend Carroll Willis, who may be here today, two sons of the Delta. We told the people of the Delta we were never coming to a segregated meeting in the Mississippi Delta again, and we were going to have to—it was about more than an election—we were going to turn this region around, and we were going to have to do it together. And a lot of people thought I was nuts. And within 30 days, everybody thought I was a genius.

And we've all been working together over there ever since, with some ups and downs and twists and turns. But I think that I have been privileged to be a part of the last 20 years of the history of the Delta. And I loved the opportunity I had to do this Delta commission, because I got to learn a lot about southern Illinois, for example, which is south of Richmond. A lot of people don't know that. I learned a lot about western Kentucky and southeastern Missouri, where Conn is from, and places that I otherwise might never have been able to become acquainted with.

And I guess, more than anything else, what I want to say is that the pledge we made

a decade ago when we issued the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission report is still what we ought to be working on, to make the people of the Delta full partners in America's future. That's why we're here today. The report that I have just been given is, in a way, a rededication to our continuing mission.

I guess what I want you to know more than anything else is, we're making progress, and we now know more than we did when we started about how to do better much more quickly. I want you to know that the Federal Government will do our part, and I will personally work on these issues until the day I leave office, and then after I do, for the rest of my life. This is a big personal issue with me, as I know it is with the Vice President and all of our people in our administration who come from this region.

Now, I want to begin with special thanks on the substance of this to Secretary Slater. We got 24 agencies together to help Secretary Slater run our Federal task force on the Delta, and we've put together the report that he has just given me. It's given us a chance to look back a decade and to look forward to the challenges and opportunities of the decade ahead.

Since 1990, a great deal has been done. You know that in the Nation, we have the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate since January of 1970, over 21 million new jobs. But the policies we put in place I think had a special impact in the Delta, especially the expansion of the earned-income tax credit and the efforts we've made that you heard Conn talk about to bring computers and access to the Internet to our schools and other public facilities throughout the Delta.

Conn's example is pretty instructive. In 1995 his school district in East Prairie had 24 computers. We helped them get 350 more at a 70 percent discount. Now, thanks to the E-rate program that the FCC promulgated, that Vice President Gore did so much to fight for, there's a \$2 billion subsidy that goes out to the poorest school districts across America every year which enables people to make the most of these computers.

In 1994, when we started this program—I'm sure the Vice President went over this—

but we had only 3 percent of our classrooms and 16 percent of our schools connected. This year we have over 95 percent of our schools, including 90 percent of the poorest schools in America, connected to the Internet, and almost three-quarters of our classrooms. And this will make a big difference, both educationally and economically, in the Delta in the years ahead.

Over the last 7 years, we've had over \$2 billion in transportation improvements, from ports to highways to airports; over \$6 billion in job training, welfare-to-work, and youth opportunity initiatives; and again, \$250 million just to connect the schools that were poor in the Delta to the Internet; more than \$10 million in direct investment in the enterprise zones and the empowerment communities, a program, again, which the Vice President has led, which has leveraged 10 times that much from private resources.

I have done what I could to do this in a bipartisan or even a nonpartisan manner. And I know Rodney said the Speaker of the House was coming to the White House tonight, to the reception. If he is there, I want every one of you to go up and shake his hand and thank him for working with me to pass the new markets legislation in Congress. I'll say more about that in a minute, but I think that is the biggest single thing we could do to help the Delta economy in a quick way. And I will say more about it, but I want you to thank him for that.

Just the tours we have taken in the Delta have already led to more resources in places like Hermitage, Arkansas, at the tomato cooperative, and Clarksdale, Mississippi. And the Private Sector Enterprise Corporation of the Delta has created more than 5,200 jobs and helped support more than 600 local businesses.

Since the 1990 Delta report, more than 10,000 Delta residents got phone service for the first time. It's hard to talk about the Internet if you don't have a telephone line. And lest you get too discouraged, let me tell you what a big problem this still is in other places, in physically remote areas. I was at the Navajo Reservation in Shiprock, New Mexico, which is in northern New Mexico near the Colorado and Utah borders, where the unemployment rate is 58 percent, and

the percentage of people without telephones is 70 percent. I was introduced by a young woman like Conn—a little younger than you—a brilliant young girl, a Native American girl, who won a contest and got a beautiful computer. And she couldn't log on to the Internet because she had to take the computer home to a home without a telephone line.

So this is a big deal, the fact that 10,000 more Delta residents have gotten telephone service. The Delta unemployment rate has gone from 7.5 percent when I took office to 5.1 percent in February. In Mississippi, the Delta counties have created jobs at a rate 13 times greater than the national average, which is saying something.

But unemployment is still above the national average. Wages and homeownership are still below the national average. Poverty and infant mortality have gone down but are still too high. And we know that the statistics don't tell the whole story. There are still towns without proper sewage systems and children sick from pollution and malnutrition. There are still millions of Americans seeking to live their dreams without a way to do it in the Delta.

I'm here because it's a big personal issue with me, but I also am here as President because it's in our national interest to do something about this. I've said this over and over again, but I want you to remember this. One of the most significant debates we have here in Washington—and one of the things, by the way, that as American citizens you'll be called upon to decide in the coming election—is, how we can continue this overall economic expansion? All of us have been there when times got bad in America. And when times got bad in America, they were always worse in the Delta. When the country got hit hard, we always got hit harder.

When I served as Governor during the decade of the eighties, until the year I ran for President there was only one month—one month—in the last 10 years I was Governor when our unemployment rate was at or below the national average. So we know when times are bad, we suffer more.

On the other hand, when times are good—you've followed this in the press; there is a

big debate now. Unemployment is at 3.9 percent. Is inflation just around the corner? Should the Federal Reserve raise interest rates more? If they raise interest rates more, will it cramp credit so much that it will kill the expansion? How long can this thing go on? Is this just going to be like a laboratory animal that sooner or later just runs out of steam and keels over?

Well, we had these academic debates up here, and right underneath our noses in the Mississippi Delta, in Appalachia, in the inner cities, on the Indian reservations, there are people who could start jobs, start businesses, grow the economy with no inflation whatever. If people are unemployed or underemployed and there are new opportunities out there and you create new workers, new employers, new taxpayers, and new consumers at the same time, there is no inflation in that growth.

So every person in America ought to be interested in the Mississippi Delta. If you're making money on Wall Street today and you'd like to keep on making it and you're worried that either high interest rates or a coming recession would hurt you, you should want the Delta to do well. If you're worried about where you're going to sell your next products in Silicon Valley, you should want the Delta to do well.

This is a huge issue for the Nation because no one knows how to do this. And as I say, that will be a big debate in the elections. Are we now so prosperous we ought to go back and try what we did in 1981 and later and have a great, big tax cut and hope it works? Or should we have a smaller tax cut and keep paying the debt down and invest in our people? You know what I prefer, but I think that it's important to understand we're going to have this debate in the context of, number one, what should we do with our prosperity, and number two, how do we keep this economy going? And it's already the longest economic expansion in history.

And right there, before the eyes of every American who knows anything about this, is the Delta and every other underdeveloped area in our country. And I'm telling you, there are billions upon billions upon billions of economic growth potential that are totally noninflationary. Because of the problems

we've had in the past, it is America's promise for the future, not just yours, that we ought to be developing here.

Now on the other hand, we know that it won't happen by accident. We have to create networks and opportunities and incentives to get this done. I have asked Congress, as Secretary Slater said, to create a Delta Regional Authority with \$30 million to invest in the region's economic future. I've asked for another \$129 million in targeted assistance for the region. And I thank my Senator, Blanche Lambert Lincoln, and Congressman Marion Berry. They sponsored the regional authority bill in Congress. I thank Senator Bill Frist for his strong bipartisan support. We've got a number of bipartisan cosponsors from across the Delta, and I hope we can bring this authority to life.

And while you're here today, I hope you will ask Senator Cochran and Senator Lott, particularly, to give this thing a shove, because I think they could sort of shove it out there if they wanted to, and we need them.

I'm sure Jess White has already talked about this, but the Appalachian Regional Commission proves that these things do make a difference. They make a difference because they institutionalize concentration on a specific area and its opportunities. And it makes a difference when you've got somebody who is paid to get up every day and think about you and what you can do in an organized, focused way.

We also want to announce today new support for the Delta in three broad areas: attracting new business and economic development, investing in basic infrastructure, and building strong communities.

I know this morning the Vice President presented our new package of \$20 million in Delta economic development initiatives, loans and grants for small businesses, training, community technology centers, community financial institutions, and tourism. That's an important issue.

Let me emphasize one part of that, the community technology centers. The congressional majority took that out of my budget, and I'm going to try to get it back in. But let me tell you why it counts. The computers are great for Conn. And in the districts where they can take the computers home and the

parents can learn to E-mail the teachers, learn to use it, that's great. But most places in the Delta, we have a lot of adults who could benefit from what they could learn just by learning how to use the computers and learning what resources are available to them on the Internet. That's what these community computer centers are all about. They are designed to set up a thousand more of them and to support the few that are out there now—there's the network out there now in the country—so that all the adults in the low income places in America can go in and learn to use the Internet for their own benefit, both because they developed computer skills and to get the information off of it.

Now, this is a big deal. I'll just give you two examples of the potential, because I want all of you to start thinking about this, and I want you to help me get these community computer centers. I'll just give you two examples. One is an American example, eBay. eBay is a site on the web where you can trade things. You get on. You find out somebody's got something to sell, and you can buy it. If you've got something that you want to sell, somebody else can buy it. There are now 30,000 people making a living on eBay, not working for the company, making a living trading on eBay, and a significant percentage of them are former welfare recipients.

Now, that's an amazing thing. Why? This is a big deal. What does the Internet do that's different, that's important for the Delta? It collapses time and space, the physical isolation that you feel. Conn talked about all the wonders of smalltown life, which I share, but being physically isolated. The Internet can collapse time and space. It can bring any subject to his school. It can bring any piece of information in the Library of Congress. The whole Encyclopedia Britannica's on the net now. And the same thing is true for the economy. So that's one example.

Second example: I was in India recently, as you may remember. I went to one of the poorer states in India, Rajasthan, to a little village where the village women met me and showed me their dairy cooperative, and the local government people showed me how they were governing. And then they took me to the town's public building, which was an

old building, but inside the public building was a brand-spanking new computer.

And this lady came in with a newborn baby, and she wanted to learn how she could best take care of her child. And there was someone there to assist her, and the program was done in English and Hindi—modified in other languages when they need them, in other parts of the country. And this lady—every piece of information on the Federal and State government that they had already was on the net—everything—it was on their website there.

So she calls up the Health Department website and punches the—she clicks the mouse for “Early Childhood Care,” and a couple of pages come up with great visuals, so that if you're virtually illiterate you can still figure out what it says. She punches the printer. She gets this unbelievable information, spits right out. And this woman, in a country with a per capita income of \$450, takes home with her newborn information just as good as you could get from the best suburban medical center in this area.

Now, this is why we need the community computer centers. And I hope you will help me get them all over the Delta. And I thank the Vice President for the work he's done on that.

We also have some basic infrastructure needs. There are still communities in the Delta that don't have safe drinking water, that don't have adequate sewage systems, that basically have—their basic public health infrastructure is inadequate to support any new industrial investment of any size.

I remember when I first went to the Delta, running for Governor in '78. I'd go in these little old towns, and there was sewage open in the streets. I gave every penny of Federal money I could beg, borrow, or steal to little places that didn't have any political clout, because there was 150 people here and 250 there, to clean it up, and it changed the lives of a lot of these communities. A lot of those places are doing much better 20 years later just because we gave them basic infrastructure.

So today we're going to give \$30 million more to 19 communities like that to improve the water supply. This is going to be a big issue for the whole world for the next 50

years—you mark my words—clean water and adequate sewage, things that most of us take for granted—huge issue around the world.

Most people believe that AIDS is the biggest public health problem in the world. It is in Africa. Seventy percent of the cases are there. Malaria and TB, they're the big problems. But we still have more children every day die in poor places in the world because of dysentery and other problems—diarrhea—directly related to dehydration because they don't have safe water.

So we shouldn't forget that. So I'm making this commitment today to \$30 million more as a symbolic one, but I ask you to continue to support these initiatives as well.

This is about more than bricks and mortar. We also have to make communities strong and healthy. We also want to do more on safety. You know, I said this a couple of days ago when we got the last crime report: With crime now down 8 years in a row, we know we can lower the crime rate, but no one believes we're as safe as we ought to be. And I'm trying to put another 50,000 police officers out there. Today we're going to put some more in Helena and Greenwood, Louisiana, and I hope you will continue to support that.

We're also supporting environmental education and environmentally sound farming, helping more Delta residents to buy and build their own homes, and funding a new public/private partnership to provide regional planning support that much of the Delta has never had.

And let me just say this about the housing issue. Again, we now know things we didn't know 15 years ago. A couple of years ago I went out to California, to the Inland Empire, which is east of L.A. It's the industrial area east of L.A., San Bernardino area. And on the rail line that runs out of L.A., I met with HUD and the Energy Department and the Home Builders at this joint effort to build a low income housing project for low income working people. And the deal they made these folks was: If you'll live here, even if you have to go to Los Angeles to work, we pledge to you that we will build you a home where your power bills will be 40 percent lower, at least, than they would be in a home of this size anywhere else in California.

And what did they do? They had the basic insulation. They used these new windows that cost a little more money, but they keep out a lot more heat and cold, and they let in a lot more light. And they used light bulbs that cost about twice as much, but they last 3 or 4 times as long and, therefore, they're energy efficient. And they had solar panels that looked just like ordinary tar shingles you put on a roof. You can't tell the difference, except they're slightly wider now. And I can report to you that after a couple of years those working people—a lot of these people were working for \$25,000 a year. Their average fuel bills are 65 percent below the State average for the same square footage in California.

Now, we could build housing like that all over the Delta. It would put people to work building the houses. You would probably get the financing worked out for some of the energy conservation stuff, working with the utilities. It would enable them to manage their power load better, and it's like a huge tax cut. Can you imagine what it would be like if your power bill was two-thirds lower every month? So there are real opportunities here I think you ought to look at for economic development and improving the quality of life.

Now, we want to do more, but I need your help on three things that we're trying to do here. First, the new markets initiative, we're working with the Democrats and the Republicans in the Congress—and the Speaker has taken a big personal interest in this because he's from rural Illinois—and we're trying to take the ideas that some of the Republican House Members have who are interested in this, and ours, and put it together. But when we get all finished, whatever it's called and whatever it looks like, the bottom line is, here's what we're trying to do: We're trying to give people with money in America the same incentives, to invest in poor areas in America that they can get today, in terms of tax credits, loan guarantees, and other incentives to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Africa or Asia or anywhere else. I think it's a very important thing.

And again, I favor the foreign investment incentives. You know, we just passed through the House, and I think we're going to pass

today or tomorrow in the Senate, the Africa/Caribbean Basin Initiative. I want to be a good neighbor. I like this. But we ought to understand that our biggest markets are those that are right here before us. So I need your help in that.

The second thing is, I want you to help us pass this Delta commission legislation. I want you to talk to all the Senators and all the Representatives from all the States from the Delta. This is a totally nonpolitical deal. I don't care whose name goes on it. I don't care what happens. I just want to know that when we're not here anymore and our stewardship is over, that there is an institutional focus where somebody gets up every day and thinks about this region. And I want you to help us pass it.

Last thing I want you to help us do is to pass our educational initiatives that are necessary to turn around these schools. And I want to close with this because it's really important. You know as well as I do, if you want more outside investments, you want people to come in, you've got to be able to prove you've got good schools, that you're educating people that have good skills and that people who come in from the outside, their kids will be in good schools.

So I'm going to close with this story. I just got back from one of my education tours. And I was in Owensboro, Kentucky; which is in western Kentucky; therefore, it's in our region. So—is somebody from over there? [Applause] So I'll tell you this story. Now, in 1989 before I became President, I worked with President Bush and the Bush administration to define these national education goals. And then in 1993 we passed this program called Goals 2000 to help States and school districts meet the goals.

Then, we realized that we needed to do more, so we said—we passed through the Congress in the next couple of years, legislation that said all the States had to have standard, and they had to identify schools that were low performing and come up with strategies to turn them around. Now I'm trying to pass legislation that goes further, but let's just focus on that. And what I tried to do is to say that we ought to give States funds to help these low performing schools work, to train the teachers better, to support the

principals. We also ought to end the practice of social promotion but not call kids failures when the system fails them. So we ought to give every school district that needs it after-school, summer school programs, and all of that. And we've been working on that.

Now, here's my exhibit A for the Delta: Western Kentucky, Owensboro. In 1996 Kentucky said, okay, we're going to identify all our failing schools, and here they are, 170 of them. Within 2 years of just being identified and supported and focused on, 91 percent of those schools were off the list. Now—[applause]—no, no it gets better. So here's Owensboro, exhibit A; two-thirds of the kids in Owensboro are eligible for free or reduced lunches—not your rich, suburban school, right?—two-thirds of the kids. Now, in 4 years since they were identified, and this school—this elementary school I was in—as a school that was low performing, here's what has happened.

Four years ago there were 12 percent of the kids reading at or above grade level; today, 57 percent are. Four years ago there were 5 percent doing math at or above grade level; today, 70 percent are. Four years ago there were zero kids in this school doing science at or above grade level; today, 64 percent are. This school is now the 18th best grade school in Kentucky, even though two-thirds of the kids are at or below—are eligible for school lunches—two-thirds.

Now, here's the other thing. In Kentucky, 10 of the 20 highest performing grade schools—10 of the 20—have half or more of the kids eligible for free or reduced lunches. Race, economics, and location are not destiny if you've got a good education system and you give these kids a chance to learn.

So again I say, I need your help. Ask the Congress to help us with the new markets. Ask the Congress to help us with the Delta commission. Ask the Congress to give enough money to give every school in the country that's not performing well a chance to give their kids summer school and after-school programs, teacher training programs, the things necessary to make these schools work.

I'd give anything if when I had been Governor we knew as much about what to do in the schools, in the economy, as we now

know. And that's the last point I want to make. When I took office here, even a lot of people that helped me in '92 were not really sure that anything could get better. And if I had told you in 1992, "I want you to vote for me, and I'll get rid of this \$300-billion a year deficit, and, oh, by the way, we'll be running surpluses 3 years in a row, and when I leave office we'll pay off \$350 billion of the national debt," you would have said, "You know, he seems like a nice young fellow, but he's slightly deranged. We better send him home." *[Laughter]*

So we know now; so we don't have an excuse. We know we can make the economy better. We know that we can have schools that are very poor perform at a very high level. We know we can lower the crime rate. We know we can grow the economy and improve the environment. We know we can cut the welfare rolls in half and still support low income people who are working and trying to do right by their kids, if you give them the right child care and transportation and other support they need. It's not like we don't know we can do better now.

And I would argue that when you know you can do better, when you're not just living on hope but you've got evidence, you have a heavier responsibility. So I'm glad you're here. I want you to tell us more of what we can do. I want you to give me every chance you can to do everything I can while I'm in office. I want you to help me pass this legislation.

But when you leave here, more than anything else, I want you to believe we can do this. We can do this. This is not a wing and a prayer. This is not hope. This is evidence. We can do it. It's just a question of whether we're prepared to pay the price of time and effort and organization and passion.

Everybody loves the Delta. It's about time we all did something about it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. in the Arlington Ballroom at the Crystal Gateway Marriott. In his remarks, he referred to student Conn Q. Davis, who introduced the President; Gov. David R. (Ronnie) Musgrove of Mississippi; Mayor Willie W. Herenton of Memphis, TN; Lt. Gov. Corinne Wood of Illinois; Jesse L. White, Jr., Federal cochair, Appalachian Regional Com-

mission; J. Wayne Leonard, chief executive officer, Entergy Corp.; Carroll Willis, director, community service division, Democratic National Committee; Arkansas State Senator Bud Canada; and student Myra Jodie, Steamboat Navajo Nation.

Statement on Congressional Action on Appropriations Legislation

May 10, 2000

Today both the House and Senate subcommittees passed appropriation bills for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education that fail to invest in the Nation's future and turn back our progress in helping opportunity and prosperity reach all corners of America. During this period of economic prosperity and budget surplus, we should seize the opportunity to improve our Nation's schools, advance the health and well-being of our citizens, and train and protect our workers. Regrettably, misguided priorities and insufficient resources in the bills adopted today have led the Congress in a different direction. Unfortunately, these actions today invest too little in our schools and demand too little from them.

The House bill shortchanges essential initiatives and fails to support our Nation's children and schools. It fails to provide sufficient funding to strengthen accountability and help turn around low performing schools, reduce class size, increase after-school opportunities, renovate aging and neglected schools, close the digital divide, improve teacher quality, and provide mentoring to help children go to and succeed in college. It hurts unemployed and working Americans by cutting training and other programs that help them find jobs and work in safe environments. The bill fails to make key investments in childcare, preschool, and other important services for poor working families. The House bill fails to support key health programs by reducing funding for mental health services, family planning services, and substance abuse programs and eliminates funding to improve access to health care for the uninsured. The bill also cut funding needed to ensure nursing home quality and strengthen health benefits administration.

The Senate bill provides more acceptable funding levels for many key programs but does so by bankrupting the Social Services Block Grant, shifting money from children's health insurance, and making other cuts. The bill does not guarantee funding for critical education priorities such as school renovation and reducing class size and underfunds programs to help unemployed workers and youth get job training. The Senate bill also fails to support critical health programs, including funding for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, mental health and substance abuse services, and nursing home quality oversight.

If a bill that fails to address these concerns were to come to me in its current form, I would have to veto it. I look forward to working with Congress to ensure that this bill strengthens our Nation's schools and supports and enhances other important national priorities while continuing to honor our commitment to fiscal integrity.

Proclamation 7305—Mother's Day, 2000

May 10, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

We are living in a new century and a new age, where the revolution in communications technology is changing almost every aspect of human experience. But even in this new era of global connections, there is perhaps no more powerful link than the love between mother and child.

That bond is a child's first experience of the world, and that love is often the deepest source of the self-esteem, courage, and character that children need to thrive. Mothers are their children's first teachers; they are their inspiring role models whose generosity, compassion, and unconditional acceptance give children the strength and encouragement to reach their fullest potential and to make their own contributions to their families, communities, and country.

Even in this age of spectacular technological advances, mothers still face the daunting challenges of balancing the respon-

sibilities of home and work and meeting the changing emotional, educational, and physical needs of their children. Mothers strive to provide a safe and nurturing environment. They help their children navigate the often stormy waters of an increasingly complicated world. They teach their children to approach conflict with words, not violence; to cherish the richness of our diversity and reject prejudice in any form; and to believe in themselves.

Each year we set aside this special day to acknowledge all that our mothers—whether biological or foster, adoptive or stepmothers—have given us. It is a time to reflect on all we have gained from their unwavering care, guidance, and sacrifice, and a time to express openly our deep gratitude and abiding love. The Congress, by a joint resolution approved May 8, 1914 (38 Stat. 770), has designated the second Sunday in May of each year as "Mother's Day" and requested the President to call for its appropriate observance.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 14, 2000, as Mother's Day. Whether we are able to share this special day with our mothers in person or are blessed only with our memories of their love, in our hearts they remain with us always. I urge all Americans to express their love and respect for their mothers on this day, to speak the words of appreciation we too often neglect to say, and to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:29 a.m., May 11, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 12.

**Letter to Senator Dianne Feinstein
on Signing an Executive Order on
Access to HIV/AIDS Pharmaceuticals
and Medical Technologies**

May 10, 2000

Dear Senator Feinstein:

I am pleased to inform you that today I will sign an Executive Order that is intended to help make HIV/AIDS-related drugs and medical technologies more accessible and affordable in beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries. The Executive Order, which is based in large part on your work in connection with the proposed Trade and Development Act of 2000, formalizes U.S. government policy in this area. It also directs other steps to be taken to address the spread of HIV and AIDS in Africa, one of the worst health crises the world faces.

As you know, the worldwide HIV/AIDS epidemic has taken a terrible toll in terms of human suffering. Nowhere has the suffering been as great as in Africa, where over 5,500 people per day are dying from AIDS. Approximately 34 million people in sub-Saharan Africa have been infected and, of those infected, approximately 11.5 million have died. These deaths represent more than 80 percent of the total HIV/AIDS-related deaths worldwide.

To help those countries most affected by HIV/AIDS fight this terrible disease, the Executive Order directs the U.S. Government to refrain from seeking, through negotiation or otherwise, the revocation or revision of any law or policy imposed by a beneficiary sub-Saharan government that promotes access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals and medical technologies. This order will give sub-Saharan governments the flexibility to bring life saving drugs and medical technologies to affected populations. At the same time, the order ensures that fundamental intellectual property rights of U.S. businesses and inventors are protected by requiring sub-Saharan governments to provide adequate and effective intellectual property protection consistent with World Trade Organization rules. In this way, the order strikes a proper balance between the need to enable sub-Saharan governments to increase access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals and medical tech-

nologies and the need to ensure that intellectual property is protected.

I know that you preferred that this policy be included in the Conference Report on the Trade and Development Act of 2000, as did I. However, through this Executive Order, the policy this Administration has pursued with your support will be implemented by the U.S. Government. The Executive Order will encourage beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries to build a better infrastructure to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS as they build better lives for their people. At the same time, the Trade and Development Act of 2000 will strengthen African economies, enhance African democracy, and expand U.S.-African trade. Together, these steps will enable the United States to forge closer ties with our African allies, broaden export opportunities for our workers and businesses, and promote our values around the world.

Thank you for your leadership on this critically important issue.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

**Executive Order 13155—Access to
HIV/AIDS Pharmaceuticals and
Medical Technologies**

May 10, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including sections 141 and chapter 1 of title III of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2171, 2411–2420), section 307 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 2421), and section 104 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (22 U.S.C. 2151b), and in accordance with executive branch policy on health-related intellectual property matters to promote access to essential medicines, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. (a) In administering sections 301–310 of the Trade Act of 1974, the United States shall not seek, through negotiation or otherwise, the revocation or revision of any intellectual property law or policy of

a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country, as determined by the President, that regulates HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals or medical technologies if the law or policy of the country:

(1) promotes access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals or medical technologies for affected populations in that country; and

(2) provides adequate and effective intellectual property protection consistent with the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) referred to in section 101(d)(15) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(15)).

(b) The United States shall encourage all beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries to implement policies designed to address the underlying causes of the HIV/AIDS crisis by, among other things, making efforts to encourage practices that will prevent further transmission and infection and to stimulate development of the infrastructure necessary to deliver adequate health services, and by encouraging policies that provide an incentive for public and private research on, and development of, vaccines and other medical innovations that will combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa.

Sec. 2. Rationale: (a) This order finds that:

(1) since the onset of the worldwide HIV/AIDS epidemic, approximately 34 million people living in sub-Saharan Africa have been infected with the disease;

(2) of those infected, approximately 11.5 million have died;

(3) the deaths represent 83 percent of the total HIV/AIDS-related deaths worldwide; and

(4) access to effective therapeutics for HIV/AIDS is determined by issues of price, health system infrastructure for delivery, and sustainable financing.

(b) In light of these findings, this order recognizes that:

(1) it is in the interest of the United States to take all reasonable steps to prevent further spread of infectious disease, particularly HIV/AIDS;

(2) there is critical need for effective incentives to develop new pharmaceuticals, vaccines, and therapies to combat the HIV/AIDS crisis, including effective global intel-

lectual property standards designed to foster pharmaceutical and medical innovation;

(3) the overriding priority for responding to the crisis of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa should be to improve public education and to encourage practices that will prevent further transmission and infection, and to stimulate development of the infrastructure necessary to deliver adequate health care services;

(4) the United States should work with individual countries in sub-Saharan Africa to assist them in development of effective public education campaigns aimed at the prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission and infection, and to improve their health care infrastructure to promote improved access to quality health care for their citizens in general, and particularly with respect to the HIV/AIDS epidemic;

(5) an effective United States response to the crisis in sub-Saharan Africa must focus in the short term on preventive programs designed to reduce the frequency of new infections and remove the stigma of the disease, and should place a priority on basic health services that can be used to treat opportunistic infections, sexually transmitted infections, and complications associated with HIV/AIDS so as to prolong the duration and improve the quality of life of those with the disease;

(6) an effective United States response to the crisis must also focus on the development of HIV/AIDS vaccines to prevent the spread of the disease;

(7) the innovative capacity of the United States in the commercial and public pharmaceutical research sectors is unmatched in the world, and the participation of both these sectors will be a critical element in any successful program to respond to the HIV/AIDS crisis in sub-Saharan Africa;

(8) the TRIPS Agreement recognizes the importance of promoting effective and adequate protection of intellectual property rights and the right of countries to adopt measures necessary to protect public health;

(9) individual countries should have the ability to take measures to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic, provided that such measures are consistent with their international obligations; and

(10) successful initiatives will require effective partnerships and cooperation among governments, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector, and greater consideration should be given to financial, legal, and other incentives that will promote improved prevention and treatment actions.

Sec. 3. Scope. (a) This order prohibits the United States Government from taking action pursuant to section 301(b) of the Trade Act of 1974 with respect to any law or policy in beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries that promotes access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals or medical technologies and that provides adequate and effective intellectual property protection consistent with the TRIPS Agreement. However, this order does not prohibit United States Government officials from evaluating, determining, or expressing concern about whether such a law or policy promotes access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals or medical technologies or provides adequate and effective intellectual property protection consistent with the TRIPS Agreement. In addition, this order does not prohibit United States Government officials from consulting with or otherwise discussing with sub-Saharan African governments whether such law or policy meets the conditions set forth in section 1(a) of this order. Moreover, this order does not prohibit the United States Government from invoking the dispute settlement procedures of the World Trade Organization to examine whether any such law or policy is consistent with the Uruguay Round Agreements, referred to in section 101(d) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act.

(b) This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not create, any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 10, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register,
8:45 a.m., May 11, 2000]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on May 12.

Interview With Diane Rehm of WAMU National Public Radio

May 10, 2000

Ms. Rehm. Mr. President, thank you for joining us.

The President. I'm glad to do it.

Normal Trade Relations With China and the Vice President

Ms. Rehm. It looks as though the normalized trade relations with China isn't likely to go through. Would you agree with that?

The President. I'm not sure yet.

Ms. Rehm. You're still not sure?

The President. We don't have the votes yet. I think we'll get the votes, because I think it's the right thing for the country. But I think it will be—I won't know for a few days yet.

Ms. Rehm. If you do, how might that hurt or help Mr. Gore in his bid for the Presidency?

The President. Well, I think that, on balance, it will help him because he's been a very strong supporter of this agreement and, generally, of our trade policy. And even though some of the strongest elements of the Democratic Party and some of our best friends are on the other side of this fight, it shows that he's willing to take an independent stand to do what he believes is right. And I think that's very, very important.

I think that's something people will look to, and they might compare that, for example, with Governor Bush's going to Bob Jones University and defending his outreach to Jerry Falwell and the members of the far right and his party, and conclude that—our people, the people that we're disagreeing with are good folks, and we're proud to have them as a part of our party; we want them to. But we need a President who will make an independent judgment from time to time.

Ms. Rehm. So you think it's not going to hurt him?

The President. Yes, I think it's a net plus. I think that—let me just say this—I think the reverse is, it would be a problem for our country. That's the most important thing. I

think it would be a big problem for our country if it didn't pass, because it would increase the chance that something bad would happen in that area; it would give aid and comfort to the reactionaries in China; and it would make it possible for people to question whether the Democrats were running away from our global responsibilities.

Right now, that's the burden the Republicans have to bear, because they defeated the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. They opposed our efforts to lead a global march on ending the testing of nuclear weapons. And I think that was a terrible mistake by them. So it's a problem they'll have to come to grips with. I just don't want to see our party responsible for walking away from another big opportunity and responsibility of the United States.

Million Mom March and Gun Safety Legislation

Ms. Rehm. The Million Mom March takes place this Sunday. How do you address the concerns of law-abiding citizens who own guns, who feel that any additional controls would be an infringement on their personal rights, on their second amendment rights?

The President. Well, I'd just disagree with them. I think that every law-abiding gun owner ought to want to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children and should recognize that no strategy will succeed that doesn't have a lot of prevention.

For example, I don't see why any gun owner could possibly object to closing the gun show loophole and the Brady background check. We now know these background checks have kept 500,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers from buying handguns. I don't see why any law-abiding gun owner would object to having a photo ID and a license for anybody buying handguns that proves that, A, you've passed the background check and, B, you've passed a safety training course on a gun. We do that for cars.

If you have to get a license to prove you can drive a car and that you're a law-abiding citizen and you have to observe seatbelt laws and speed limits, you don't hear people going around complaining about "car control." They don't call it "car control." They call it sensible public safety. I just think we need

to look at the specifics of every proposal. Does this keep any law-abiding hunter out of the deer woods in deer season? No. Does it keep any law-abiding sports shooter away from his or her activities? No. Does it prevent any law-abiding gun owner who believes that he'll be safer having a gun in their home from having a gun in their home? No.

So if the answers to those questions is no, but it would clearly keep more guns out of the hands of children and criminals, then we ought to be for it, and everybody ought to be for it. That's what I believe.

President's Disappointments in Office

Ms. Rehm. You've had a number of successes during your administration. The economy is up. Unemployment is down. The crime rate is down. What has been your greatest disappointment or failure?

The President. I'm disappointed that we haven't been able to make health care available to all the working families of the country. You know, the very poorest people have health care through the Government Medicaid program. And we have extended health insurance to children of low-income working families through the Children's Health Insurance Program, and we're still enrolling more children in that. But I'm very disappointed in that.

And I'm disappointed that the two parties in Congress, once we became financially able to do it when we started running surpluses, we could save Social Security now for the baby boom generation. And as yet, they haven't taken me up on even the easiest part of my proposal, which is to dedicate the savings we will get from paying down the debt, because of the Social Security taxes we pay—dedicate those savings from lower interest rates on the debt to the Trust Fund.

If we did that, we could take the life of Social Security out to about 2054—just that—which would take it beyond the life expectancy of all but the most fortunate baby boomers and get this country over a big hump. Now, I think there are further Social Security reforms that should be enacted, but they'll have to await the election and probably a less—hopefully, a less partisan climate.

Relations With Republican Congress

Ms. Rehm. Of course, from the time you first came into office, there's been this animosity between you and the Republicans in Congress—and some of the Democrats, as well. What do you think it is that has created this climate of mistrust between you and the Congress?

The President. Well first of all, I disagree that there's very much among the Democrats. I have enjoyed, even in my first 2 years, I got a higher percentage of Democratic support for my programs than Presidents Johnson and Carter did, and Kennedy, as an historical fact. We didn't lose many Democrats. You always lose—some just disagree with you.

So they've been quite good to me. I think what happened is, I had more partisan opposition than at any time in history, and I think there were two causes. I think some Republicans thought that the Democratic majority in Congress had been too hard on their Presidents, and so they thought it was payback time. I think there was some of that.

But the overwhelming reason is that they resented the fact that they didn't have the White House. They thought that they owned the White House, and they thought they had found a formula that would always keep Democrats out of the White House. They would say we couldn't be trusted on the economy and foreign policy and national defense and welfare and crime, and we were going to tax people to death and all the things they always said. And when it didn't work, I think they were very angry.

And they decided that they would oppose me at every turn and in every way. I've had many of them come up to me and tell me that that's what they did. It was about power. It wasn't about all these things, and it had nothing to do with—oh, some of them may have very strong personal adverse feelings, but they're basically rooted in they thought that they owned the White House. And the people own the White House. I don't own it. The Democrats don't own it, either. But I think that's really what drove it.

And I certainly hope that after this next election that they will moderate their conduct. But we'll just have to see. I don't personally have—you know, I worked with all

these people, and I've worked with them, and I think it's important to point out that in spite of all the partisan animosity, we have gotten a great deal done here. We passed the Balanced Budget Act together. We passed welfare reform together. We passed the bill to put 100,000 teachers in the schools together and a lot of other really big—we passed financial services reform, telecommunications reform. We got a lot done together because, in the end, if we keep working—in the end, to get anything done, we have to work together.

And I'd keep thinking this is easing off, and we're making improvements. I just—I have a lot of people that I have very good relationships with in the Republican caucus, and I will continue to just try to bring more of them around to the idea that we should all be in the business of governing. We have these elections on a regular basis, and before you know, it we have another one, and before you know it, there's a new crowd in town. And it's a terrible waste of energy to spend all your time in partisan fights.

The thing that I'm most discouraged about right now is that the Senate has been here since January and has only approved 11 of my proposed appointments. I've got over 250 proposed appointments up there. And they can say, "Well, this always happens in election year." That's simply not true. If you look at—it's true that the appointments process slows down in election years if you have a President of one party and a Senate of another. It slows down. But it doesn't come to a grinding halt like they're doing now. And again, this is about political power. But it's not good for the taxpayers. It's not good for the public interest. And I hope that I'll be able to persuade the Senate to resume fulfilling their constitutional responsibility to act on these appointments. And they ought to vote against them if they don't like them.

Ms. Rehm. There seemed to have been some personal animosity against you, personally, right from the start, before you left Arkansas.

The President. Yes, I think there was. But it was rooted in—there's a new book out by Joe Conason and Gene Lyons called "The Hunting of the President" that explains what it was about. It was, they were afraid I was

going to win. And they thought it would upset their automatic hold on the White House and their little formula. Maybe they didn't like me, but I think mostly what they didn't like was the prospect that they wouldn't win the White House for ever and ever and ever.

I think it's not too much to say that before the '92 election, they really thought they had found a formula, and there would never be another Democratic President, not for a long, long, long time. Maybe a third party would have to come up before they'd ever be challenged. And it made them very angry. And I kept telling them that politics is about ideas and action, and we've got elections all the time, and nobody stays around forever. They need to relax and have a good time and go to work.

Whenever they did, we got a lot done. We got a lot done together. I enjoyed working with them. But I think, to me, spending your time on personal animosity is highly counter-productive. Life is too short for that.

Impact of 2000 Election

Ms. Rehm. How and to what extent do you think the character and the goals of the Federal Government might change if either George Bush or Al Gore is elected in November?

The President. Well, I think both the nature and the goals will change. I think if the Vice President—regardless, because the country is changing. And the environment in which our people live and, therefore, in which our Government operates will change.

I think if the Vice President is elected, he will do what he said he would do, which is to stay with the economic policy that has brought us this unprecedented prosperity but to modernize it. I think he will implement his—keep paying down the debt. He will continue to try to do more for the poor areas of our country and the cities and the rural areas that have been left behind. And I think he will try to save enough money to make sure we protect Social Security and Medicare and reform it for the baby boom generation and to continue to invest in education. So I think that's what he'll do.

If Governor Bush gets elected, I think he'll do what he said he would do. I think it's not

necessary to attack these people personally. I mean, most people do what they say they're going to do. And what Governor Bush said he was going to do is have a tax cut much bigger than the one I vetoed before, defense increases bigger than the ones that I proposed, and vouchers for our schools. And I believe if that happens, we'll basically be back to the Reagan-Bush economic philosophy, which is cut the revenues of the Government, even if it means going back to deficits and higher interest rates. And it will mean that we won't have much money left over to invest in education or the environment or health care. That's what they've—but I think you have to just look at what they say they're going to do and ask yourself what the consequences are.

I think if Al Gore gets elected, he'll try to grow the economy and keep cleaning up the environment. I think if Governor Bush gets elected, he will do what he did in Texas. He will let the people who basically are the primary polluters control environmental policy. That's what he did in Texas. He got rid of all the environmental commissioners, appointed someone who represented the chemical industry, someone from the Farm Bureau, and someone who was a political activist. I think—but that's what they—we shouldn't be surprised if people do what they say they'll do.

I think that the next President will get two to four appointments to the Supreme Court. So I think if the Vice President gets elected, he'll continue to appoint diverse judges who are committed to individual liberties and basically in the mainstream of American constitutional history, the way I've tried to do. And I think if Governor Bush gets elected, he'll appoint judges more like the ones appointed by the previous Reagan and Bush administrations. And if they get two to four appointments on the Supreme Court, I think *Roe v. Wade* will be repealed, and a lot of other things that have been a part of the fabric of our constitutional life will be gone. Because—and again, I just think—just look at what these people say they believe, both candidates, what they say they're going to do and assume that they will do it. There's been a lot of studies which show that, by and large,

people who get elected President do what they say they're going to do.

Ms. Rehm. What about foreign policy, and the question of how the two might deal differently with issues of foreign policy?

The President. Well, the Vice President has a big advantage in the sense that he has worked on this for not only 8 years as Vice President, where he's had a major role in issues affecting our nuclear security and issues affecting biological and chemical warfare and our relationship with Russia, our relationship with South Africa, our relationship in the Middle East. So he's got a rich, real history here.

Governor Bush, like me when I got elected, is Governor, and he served far less time than I did as Governor. But he would say, "But my father was President, and I know all these big-time Republicans, and they're all for me. So I can get them all to come and give me good advice." And so I think, again, the best thing to do is to say that on the question of experience and record, I think the Vice President has the better claim there.

But I'm more concerned about the positions that Governor Bush has taken because, again, I think you have to assume these candidates are honorable people and they will do what they say. He's opposed to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and he says that he wants to build a much bigger missile defense system than the evidence warrants right now—it may support it later—no matter what the consequences are to the efforts we're making to reduce the nuclear weapons threat around the world.

So I think that that gives me some pause. I think that's troublesome, because it could cause the country a lot of trouble in the next 4 or 5 years. And he says that's where he says he is, and so I assume he—I believe he believes that.

President's Role in the Democratic Party

Ms. Rehm. Mr. President, as your time here in the White House winds down, what role do you see for yourself in the Democratic Party now?

The President. You mean, right now, or in the future? Right now?

Ms. Rehm. Right now.

The President. Well, I'm trying to help—first of all, I'm trying to help as many of our candidates as possible. I'm trying to help as many of our candidates for the Senate and the House of Representatives. I will do whatever I can to help the Vice President in the fall. I will try to make sure that our side has enough funds to compete with the Republicans. They will have more money as they always do, but I think we've got a better message, and so I think if we've got enough money to get our message out, we'll be fine. So I expect to work on all that.

I remember in '98, they outspent us by \$100 million, and we still won seats in the House because we had a good message. We said we were for 100,000 teachers in our schools, and we were for modernizing our school facilities. We were for a Patients' Bill of Rights. We had a good specific set of things we were for. And we will in the fall.

And so I'm going to do my best to just be a messenger for that and support other people. That's what I'm doing. I'm not a candidate anymore, so I get to go back to being a good citizen and be supportive of other people.

Post-Presidential Plans

Ms. Rehm. And what are you going to do as a good citizen after you leave the White House?

The President. Well, I haven't decided yet. In terms of any income-earning activities I might undertake, I think that it's premature for me to deal with that, because I need to wait as long as I possibly can—certainly until after the election and, if possible, when I leave office, to make final decisions on that.

I intend to write a book. I intend to maintain my activities in areas that I care a lot about around the world in supporting the peaceful resolution of racial and religious and ethnic conflicts, supporting my initiatives when I'm gone from office to provide economic empowerment to poor people at home and around the world. I'm interested very much in our continuing efforts to meet the challenge of global warming, which I think will dominate a lot of our concerns for the next 20 to 30 years.

So those are just three things I want to be involved in. And then I've got to build

a library and a museum and a public policy center in Arkansas——

Ms. Rehm. Where are you going to live?

The President. Well, I'm going to live in New York with my wife, and then I'm going to be in Arkansas a few days a week while I'm building the library and museum. We're going to build an apartment there, so that I'll have a place there and a place in New York. So I expect to be back and forth between the two places and then traveling around a little bit.

You know, I'll find something useful to do. I've never—every stage of my life I've always enjoyed. I've had a good time, and I'm not—I love this job. I'd do it forever if I could. But I'm not apprehensive, exactly, about what I'll do when I'm gone. I'll just have to think about it, and I don't want to spend too much time thinking about it while I'm here, because I'm trying to squeeze every last drop out of every minute I've got to be President.

Memorable Aspects of the Presidency

Ms. Rehm. But you know, at the White House Correspondents' dinner, you certainly received a lot of acclaim as a wonderful comedian. I was in the audience, but there certainly seemed to be a little bit of wistfulness in your presentation. What are you going to miss most about being here?

The President. The job. The work. That's what I'll miss most. I'll miss the opportunity every day to push an agenda that I think is good for America and ordinary citizens and the future of this country. I will miss that terribly, because I love this work. I just love it.

I will miss the people. I will miss living in the White House. The people who work here are wonderful, and it's a great place to live. I'll miss working in this beautiful office we're sitting in now. It's the most beautiful place I've ever worked because of the shape of the room and the size of the windows. There's always light here, even when it's raining outside. I'll miss Camp David. I'll miss the Marine Band. I'll miss flying on Air Force One. I'll miss a lot of things. But the thing I'll miss more than anything else is the chance to do this work for the American people every day. It is a joy.

I've spent a lot of time since I've been here reading histories of other administrations, both ones that are very well-known and those that aren't. And I'm amazed at how many people, beginning with George Washington, complained about how hard it was to be President and how all their motives were suspect. George Washington said, once he got to be President, people treated him like he was a common criminal. [Laughter]

And of course, in the beginning of the country, the politics was about as rough as it is now. The three periods which have been most partisan were, in the beginning, Jefferson and Adams, and then, around the Civil War, and this time we're living through now.

But a lot of people referred to—Harry Truman referred to the White House as a great white prison and all that, you know. And if they were serious, I must say I just disagree with them. I think—and I've had a pretty rough time here, but it's still—it's just part of the costs of doing business. And I think the job is a joy. I mean, it's just a gift to be able to do this kind of work. I've just loved it.

Family Life in the White House

Ms. Rehm. What does 8 years in the White House do to a marriage?

The President. Oh, I think it's been good for ours, because I got to live above the store. You know, until Hillary started running for the Senate, we actually probably had more time together than we did previously. And of course, in the early years our daughter was finishing up junior high school and high school, and we were together at night a lot. You know, we talked about her schoolwork and what was going on in her life, and that was a lot of fun for us. Then, after Chelsea left and went off to college, we were able to go to Camp David more.

This is really quite a wonderful place to live. It's a great place to—there's a swimming pool here, and Hillary and I spent a lot of happy days out there just talking and reading, or on Sunday afternoons up on the Truman balcony. I mean, you can get busy and drift apart, I guess, in any circumstances. But for us, we worked hard before we got here, and we had a lot of things to do, and we've probably had more time together in our time here

than at any point in our marriage. And I've enjoyed that immensely. It's been wonderful for us.

Outlook for the Future

Ms. Rehm. Looking ahead, when Chelsea is 50, what kind of a world is she going to see? Is it going to be better or worse than it is today?

The President. I think it will be better. No one can foresee the future, but I believe it will be. I think that it will be a world in which, first of all, the average life expectancy will be bumping 100 years, because of the human genome discoveries and all the things that will happen.

I think the world will be even smaller than it is now and that the ability to collapse time and space through travel and the Internet will be greater. I think that our familiarity with, understanding of, different cultures and religions and racial groupings will be greater. And I think we will be a much more polyglot society, and I think we'll be much more comfortable with it.

Ms. Rehm. So you're optimistic.

The President. I'm very optimistic. I think the problems that we will have will be the flip side of the positive changes. That is, I think that the likelihood is that the security problems over the next 30 years—that's what you asked me about—will be from—we may have a conflict with other nations. I hope we won't. That's one of the reasons I hope this China initiative will pass. I hope we won't, but I think it's virtually certain that there will be kind of a global rough alliance between the terrorists, the gun runners, the narcotraffickers, the organized criminals. I think it's virtually certain that the technological advances which may allow us to put computers and DNA strands together in a way that are exponentially powerful may make it possible for the bad guys to have very small—I mean, less than the palm of your hand—sized chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. We don't know.

So we're going to have—and I think the enemies of the nation-state, the enemies of the ordered society, under the guise of religious or ideological causes or maybe just making their purses bigger, will probably be a bigger security threat 20 to 30 years from

now than other nations will be to America and to others.

I think that we will—unless we're prepared to have a much bleaker future, two big challenges we'll have to take on beyond our borders are global warming, which if we don't deal with it is going to be very serious, and we'll also have to view global public health problems as our own. We've got to roll back the AIDS crisis, and we've got to deal with malaria. We've got to deal with TB in Africa and other places around the world. And we have to keep working until every child in the world has access to clean water. We still lose as many kids from dysentery and diarrhea and just basically poison-polluted water as we do to these diseases every year.

So I think that Americans will be much more in tune to all that and feel much more immediately affected by what goes on in Africa or Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent or other places, than they do today.

President's Faith

Ms. Rehm. I have one last question. What is your concept of God, and how has that belief influenced your Presidency?

The President. Well, I believe in a God who is both a Creator, who created the world, who oversees the world, and who has provided an eternal existence for human beings. I believe in the eternal life of the soul.

And I think that that has helped me a lot. It's given me a lot of perspective. It's given me a lot of ability to withstand the bad times, to believe that I could overcome my own shortcomings, to understand why I had to forgive people that I thought were being unfair to me, just as I asked them to forgive me and, basically, to keep my eyes on the bigger things in life and to keep trying to grow personally, even as I was trying to do this job for the American people.

It's very important to me. And I think if you have a concept of the eternity of the human spirit, I think, as the creation of God, I think it makes it a lot easier to live with whatever happens. It keeps your head on straight when things are going well and keeps your back up and your spirits high when things are going poorly.

See that rock there? I always tell people this story. That rock came off the Moon. Neil Armstrong picked that off the Moon in 1969, and he brought it to me last year for the 30th anniversary of the Moon walk. It's a vacuum-packed rock. And it's been carbon dated at 3.6 billion years old.

Now, when people come in here and they get real mad at me or they're real upset about something, sometimes I say, "See that rock? It's 3.6 million years old. We're all just passing through here. Chill out. It's going to be all right." [Laughter]

Presidents need things that help them stay centered and keep perspective. It's very bad to think about yourself very much in this job. I don't mean in quiet moments, in reading, trying to build your personal life; I don't mean that. But I mean—most of the time when people attack you it's just part of the job. They're supposed to. That's part of the deal.

Presidents need devices, routines, systems, reminders, and friends and family to keep their focus on the American people. Because you're just here for a little while, and if you get all caught up in the things you started asking me about, the personal animosities and the partisan fights and all that, then you basically give a victory to your adversaries by letting them define how you spend your time and how you shape your feelings.

I used to tell the young people here that our job was to do the job we came here to do for the American people. Their job, they thought, was to stop us from doing our job. They could only win if we helped them by letting them get inside our heads and our hearts. And if we just kind of kept focused on what we came here to do, it was probably going to work out all right. So far it has.

Ms. Rehm. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 3 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House on May 10 for later broadcast, and it was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 11. In his remarks, the President referred to Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; and Jerry Falwell, chancellor, Liberty University.

Remarks on the Observance of National Equal Pay Day

May 11, 2000

Forest Fires in Los Alamos, New Mexico

The President. Let me welcome you all here today. And before I acknowledge the Members of Congress and our participants, I need to say just a few words about the terrible fire that has surrounded and engulfed part of Los Alamos, New Mexico. I have been briefed on the situation. The fire is continuing to blaze. The residents have been evacuated. We have taken steps to protect our lab and the assets there. And most important, I just want to give my sympathies to the people who have lost their homes.

Yesterday I declared an emergency for the area, making them eligible for disaster assistance, and today our FEMA Administrator, James Lee Witt; Secretary Richardson; our Forest Service Chief, Mike Dombeck; and the Director of the National Park Service, Bob Stanton, are all there, or will be shortly, to assess the situation and to monitor our efforts.

This is a very, very difficult situation, and I know that the prayers and support of all Americans will be with the people out there.

National Equal Pay Day

I'd like to welcome Senator Harkin, Senator Feinstein, Representative DeLauro, Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton, Representatives Mink, Woolsey, Moore, Jackson Lee, and Eddie Bernice Johnson—all of whom are here today with Secretary Herman and Martin Baily, the Chair of our Council of Economic Advisers; Janice Lachance; our EEOC Chair, Ida Castro; and all the other people who are here representing working families.

In just a few moments, I'll introduce the woman to my left, who will speak after me and is really what this day is all about.

The first Mother's Day of the 21st century is shaping up to be a time of commitment and action led by women in America. On Sunday mothers from around the Nation will march for safer communities free of gun violence.

Today women and men are coming together to uphold core American values of

equality, dignity, and justice. This has been designated Equal Pay Day. It marks the fact that the average woman had to work more than 4 months into this year just to earn what the average man earned last year. But equal pay is about more than dollars and cents. It's about right and wrong, because it's wrong when women still earn about 75 cents for every dollar earned by a man in the same line of work. It's wrong that average female workers have to work an extra 17 weeks to catch up to the wages of average male workers.

It's true, of course, that some of these differences can be explained by education, age, and occupation. But even after adjusting for these factors, there remains a sizable pay gap. As women grow older, the gap grows wider. It is widest for women of color. African-American women earn 64 cents for every dollar earned by white men. In other words, they'd have to work all of last year and into July of this year before they earned as much as the average white male earned in 1999. For Hispanic women—listen to this—equal pay day won't come until late October.

Equal pay is about all our mothers and sisters, our wives and daughters. It's about fathers and brothers and sons and husbands. It's a family issue. When women aren't paid equally, the entire family pays the price.

We also know the cost extends far beyond one's work life. If you're making less, you'll get less Social Security. You'll have less to put aside for retirement. The average woman who's about to retire, if she even gets a pension, can expect about half the pension benefits of the average man who retires.

Now is the time to close the wage gap. You have often heard me ask this question in the context of other national challenges, but if we have the lowest unemployment in over 30 years and the longest economic expansion in history and over 21 million new jobs, with the lowest poverty rate in 20 years and the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years and the lowest female household poverty rate on the record, if we can't solve this problem now, when in the world will we ever get around to it? Now is the time to deal with this.

Wages for women are up, and the pay gap has narrowed since the passage of the Equal Pay Act. But the gap is still far, far too wide, and women and their families are paying a terrible price.

Today I received a report from the Council of Economic Advisers on opportunities for women in the new economy, particularly in information technology fields, jobs such as computer scientists and programmers. Information technology now accounts for about a third of our growth, although only 8 percent of direct employment. But these are high wage jobs that pay about 80 percent above the national average.

The CEA study shows that overall employment in information technology has grown by more than 80 percent since 1993. That's amazing. Overall employment has nearly doubled since 1983. But fewer than one of three of these high-tech, high wage jobs are filled by women. Moreover, women are most underrepresented in new economy jobs where the pay is highest. For example, electrical engineering is just 10 percent female today. That is another digital divide.

The report also found that after accounting for education and age and occupation, the pay gap in information technology jobs is, unfortunately, about the same as it is in other occupations. If we're going to make the most of the new economy, we have to close the door on discrimination wherever it exists and open the door for higher opportunities for all women who wish to work and are qualified to do so.

Today I'm announcing a number of steps to do just that. First, our budget for the coming year includes a new \$20 million initiative for the National Science Foundation for grants to universities to remove barriers to career advancement for women scientists and engineers and encourage more women to pursue these fields.

This is especially important because we know the pay gap narrows sharply for women who have higher levels of education. When only one out of 10 engineers is a woman and only 30 percent of those in math and computer science jobs are women, we simply have to do more. It's important for reasons of fairness and justice. It's also important for our leadership in the global economy.

Second, I'm establishing an equal pay task force at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to ensure that our EEOC field staff have the full range of support they need to effectively investigate charges of pay discrimination.

Third, and perhaps most important, again today I renew my call to Congress to send the clear message that wage discrimination against women is just as unacceptable as discrimination based on race or ethnicity.

The best way to do that is by acting this year. Support legislation to strengthen existing wage discrimination laws. Support our equal pay initiative in next year's budget to provide \$10 million for EEOC efforts to help in wage discrimination and \$17 million for Secretary Herman's efforts to train women in nontraditional jobs, including those in high-tech fields.

Thirty-five years ago, when President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act—now more than 35 years ago—he said, I quote, “It adds to our laws another structure basic to democracy.” For over 7 years now, the Vice President and I have tried to build on that basic idea, to include more women in every aspect of our administration's life and to create more opportunities for all Americans, women and men equally. We have not succeeded in closing the pay gap. We need the help of Congress to do it. It is very, very important.

We all say we want to support work and family. We all say we want to open new doors of opportunity. Now's our chance, and we ought to take it.

I'd like to introduce now someone who knows about the equal pay challenge because she has lived with wage discrimination. She has fought against wage discrimination and, thankfully, she has won.

She came here from Baltimore today to tell her story. Ladies and gentlemen, Karen Simmons-Beathea.

[At this point, Ms. Simmons-Beathea, who was the plaintiff in an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission case against the Baltimore Cable Access Corp., Representatives Rosa L. DeLauro and Eleanor Holmes Norton, Senators Dianne Feinstein and Tom Harkin, and Secretary of Labor Alexis M. Herman made brief remarks.]

The President. I just wanted to say one final thing; some of the Members have alluded to it. But because of the way we introduced each other, seriatim, I don't think we adequately expressed our appreciation to Karen Simmons-Beathea, who really represents what this is all about, and I think we ought to give her another hand. *[Applause]*

And I will just leave you with this thought. There are a few issues that we're working on today that, unfortunately, tend to get cast in Washington, DC, in terms of a partisan divide. But out in the country, there isn't one. You know, when I was a young boy, I lived with a working grandfather and a working grandmother. I was raised by a working mother. Nobody has lived in one of these families for any period of time without having at least one encounter with some kind of problem we're talking about. And if it ever happens to you, especially when you are a child, you never get over it.

If you go out and talk to Americans around this country, Republicans and independents and Democrats will all tell you more or less the same thing about this issue. This is not a political or a partisan issue anywhere else. Now, you heard Eleanor Holmes Norton saying if somebody doesn't like our bills or they want to talk about the practical impact, well, we can talk about how to word the language and deal with the practical consequences. But whether we do something or not and whether what we do is meaningful or not is not a political or a partisan issue in America, and it shouldn't be here.

And if all of the people who have ever experienced anything like what Karen talked about today, would talk to all of the Members of Congress about it, we would get something done, something meaningful this year.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Exchange With Reporters Following the Observance of Equal Pay Day

May 11, 2000

[The exchange was joined in progress.]

Forest Fires in Los Alamos, New Mexico

Q. —beyond the usual response which is low interest loans and to actually rebuild the community?

The President. First of all, we're examining all that now. We've got—I want to know what the facts are. The Forest Service for a very long time has had these controlled burns, but we have to look in to it to see what the real facts are and what the responsibility of the Government is. And the rule here ought to be the "do right" rule: Whatever the right thing to do is, is exactly what should be done.

Right now we should be focusing on doing everything we can to minimize the damage of the fire and protect the lab assets, deal with the human problems, protect the lab assets. But as we look to rebuild, I think we ought to ascertain the facts and just do what the right thing to do is. That's going to be my policy. And I just don't know about the facts now to be absolutely sure, but as I do I will be for bending over backwards to do the right thing. That will be my policy.

Elia Gonzalez and Asylum Law

Q. Should Congress put into law whether a 6-year-old boy, or what age a child should be able to, of his own free will, seek asylum in the United States? Because, of course, it's not in the law right now.

The President. It's not in the law. Well, traditionally, the courts have ruled on these things based on the facts, and there have been certain presumptions about people who were above or below a certain age. And this decision, like others, has been governed by the assumption that a person below a certain age should be spoken for by a parent if the parent is a fit parent. Whether clarifying legislation will be needed, I think no one ever thought so before now. And I think we all ought to just sit and see what the Court of Appeals says and what happens, and that court decision may clarify whether we need legislation or not.

Forest Fires in Los Alamos, New Mexico

Q. Have you now been assured that the laboratory is safe?

Q. Are you going to march on Sunday?

The President. Well, they've taken extraordinary precautions. They've taken extraordinary precautions.

Am I going to what?

Million Mom March

Q. Are you going to march on Sunday?

The President. Well, I'm going to do something to support them. What I want to do is be supportive and do nothing to take away or distract from it. I'm going to do my best to help them. And we have a plan for a way that we—Hillary and I both want to be very supportive, and we will.

Gun Safety Legislation

Q. Do you believe that will motivate Congress—

The President. I don't know, but it ought to, because that's another one of those issues which is far less partisan out in the country than it is here in Washington. It's like this equal pay issue.

Q. —seeing all those women, all those people down there, will that motivate Congress to get this legislation through?

The President. It might or it might not. It depends upon whether the Members of Congress feel the human impact, which to me is the most powerful thing, and also realize that there are more and more people who care about this issue. It's becoming what I call a voting issue, because that's the thing that very often motivates Congressmen who feel torn, want to do something, but are afraid to do it because of the political implications. Most of the polls you see on issues don't mean anything to them, because the real issue is whether this issue affects how people vote.

And I think if a couple hundred thousand people show up here and several hundred thousand more at these sites around the country, it ought to send a signal that we want America to be a safe country and commonsense gun measures is a part of the strategy. And that, plus just the human impact of the stories, there's a chance it will break

through and help us break this logjam. I hope and pray that it will.

Q. Any suggestion——

The President. What?

Elian Gonzalez and Asylum Law

Q. Any suggestion as to when a child might be of his own free will?

The President. I want to wait. I may want to comment on that later, but I think we should, in all fairness, let the Court of Appeals issue their ruling, see what the state of the law is and then make some sort of judgment about whether legislation is required.

New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani

Q. Any reaction to the Giuliani news yesterday?

The President. Well, I wish him and his wife and their children well on the health front and on the domestic front. I think that's all there is—all anybody should want. People in public life have challenges and difficulties like people in other kinds of life do.

And I've always had a good personal relationship with Mayor Giuliani. It's not been affected by the fact that I think my wife would be a better Senator. And on this, I think everybody in New York and everybody in America ought to be rooting for the human side of this to work out. We should wish him well in his struggle over his illness. We should wish that family well. We should want the best for their children, and we should want some space for all of them, out of the glare of publicity, to work their family issues out. That's what I want, and I hope he gets it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden. In his remarks, the President referred to Mayor Giuliani's wife, Donna Hanover, and their children, Andrew and Caroline. The press release issued by the Office of the Press Secretary did not include the complete opening remarks of this exchange. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Proclamation 7306—National Equal Pay Day, 2000

May 11, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Long before President Kennedy signed into law the Equal Pay Act of 1963, women had proved their ability to contribute to America's labor market. During World War II, when labor shortages offered women an unprecedented opportunity to work outside the home, women excelled at jobs traditionally reserved for men. Yet, despite their enormous contribution to maintaining American production lines, women in the workforce were paid less than their male counterparts.

For most of our Nation's history, in fact, women have served within a sharply segregated workforce, enjoying fewer educational and training opportunities than men and struggling all too often to disprove confining stereotypes about their roles and capabilities. But throughout the decades, women of courage, energy, and determination have continued to enter the workforce and open doors of opportunity for succeeding generations. Today, more women are in the labor force than ever before; the female unemployment rate is at its lowest in more than 40 years; the poverty rate for households headed by women is the lowest ever recorded; and the pay gap has narrowed substantially since 1963.

Despite these gains, the battle for equal pay for women is far from over. Although 37 years have passed since the passage of the Equal Pay Act, the average woman today must still work an additional 17 weeks a year to earn what the average man earns. That pay gap grows wider as women grow older, and it is widest for women of color. African American women earn 64 cents for every dollar earned by white men, and Hispanic women earn just 55 cents. While some of

these disparities can be attributed to differences in education, experience, and occupation—which themselves often reflect troubling inequities—several studies confirm that a significant pay gap persists even after we account for these factors.

My Administration has worked hard to ensure that every American is treated with fairness and dignity in the workplace, and this year I proposed a \$27 million equal pay initiative in my fiscal year 2001 budget to combat unfair pay practices against women. This initiative includes \$10 million in funding for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to identify more quickly and respond more effectively to wage discrimination. The initiative would also enable the EEOC to launch a public service campaign to educate employees and employers about their rights and responsibilities under equal pay laws. In addition, the initiative includes funding for the Department of Labor to train women for jobs they have not traditionally held, such as those in the high-paying technology sector, and to help employers recruit and train qualified women for nontraditional occupations.

I have also urged the Congress to strengthen existing wage discrimination laws by promptly passing the Paycheck Fairness Act. This proposed legislation would provide increased penalties for equal pay violations; prohibit employers from punishing employees who share salary information with co-workers; and provide funding for research on wage discrimination and for increased training for EEOC employees who work on wage discrimination cases.

Throughout the decades, working women have persevered in their struggle for equal pay, buoyed by an unshakable faith in their own skills and self-worth and a firm commitment to the ideals of our democracy. On National Equal Pay Day, I urge all Americans to join the crusade to secure equal pay for women and to create a just and honorable work environment in which all our citizens are rewarded fairly for their talents, experience, and contributions.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United

States of America, do hereby proclaim May 11, 2000, as National Equal Pay Day. I call upon government officials, law enforcement agencies, business leaders, educators, and the American people to recognize the full value of the skills and contributions of women in the labor force. I urge all employers to review their wage practices and ensure that all their employees are paid equitably for their work.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 12, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 15.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Conferees on the Patients' Bill of Rights and an Exchange With Reporters

May 11, 2000

Africa and Caribbean Basin Trade Legislation

The President. First of all, I would like to thank this very impressive array of Senate and House Members for coming, in the midst of quite a busy time up on the Hill, as we try to work out the remaining issues to get a strong Patients' Bill of Rights passed.

I'd like to begin just by expressing my gratitude to, most recently the Senate, but also to the House, for the truly historic Africa/Caribbean Basin trade bill that passed by, I think, 77 votes in the Senate today. And this bill passed with big bipartisan majorities in both Houses. And it's an example of the kind of thing we can do if we work together. And I'm very grateful to the Congress for that and very much looking forward to this bill.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Last October the House passed the Norwood-Dingell bill by a big majority, but the conferees have not been able to agree on a bill which could then be taken back to

the Senate and the House. So this meeting is to determine what the issues are, what the prospects are for resolving them, to make it clear to these Members that I will offer anybody in the White House, starting with me, day or night, to try to help resolve this and hopefully to get a bill out.

I think it's fair to say that most of us, maybe all of us, really want a bill, not an issue, not a debate. We'd like to pass a bill. And so I'm looking forward to this meeting, and I want to thank you all for coming.

Q. What are the prospects for approving it this year?

The President. Well, you should ask us all after the meeting. *[Laughter]*

Security at the State Department

Q. Mr. President, the FBI testified today there are possible intelligence officers operating as accredited reporters at the State Department. Does that concern you, sir?

The President. Does it concern you? I should be asking if it concerns you. *[Laughter]* No, I don't want to make light of this. Of course, the testimony today was the first that I had heard that assertion, and obviously it has to be looked into.

I would have thought that you might have docile intelligence officers masquerading as hostile reporters. *[Laughter]*

Social Security

Q. Mr. President, this morning you told Diane Rehm about some predictions about what you thought George W. Bush might do if he's elected President, in terms of tax cuts, Supreme Court appointments. Do you also think that he would destroy Social Security by privatizing it, as the Vice President has charged?

The President. I don't want to talk about the campaign here. I'm here trying to get something done. I'll be glad to answer—at some appropriate time, I'll tell you what I think ought to be done on Social Security, although I'm pretty well on the record on that. But I don't think this is an appropriate thing for me to discuss right now.

Permanent Normal Trade Relations Status for China

Q. Mr. President, do you have any concern about comments by Majority Whip Delay yesterday that he may not be doing quite as well as he had hoped getting Republican votes for the China bill?

The President. No, because I've noticed he's quite effective at getting votes when the time comes—sometimes when I like it and sometimes when I don't. And I think he wants us to do our part, and I'm doing my best. I think in the end, especially after President Ford and President Carter and all those former administration members came, and after the, I think, very important reports in the press today about the Chinese dissidents favoring this vote, I think we'll get there. We've just got a lot of hard work to do.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Do you have an update on the situation in Northern Ireland, Mr. President? And do you foresee a situation where you would be able to travel over there to celebrate some success?

The President. Well, we're not done yet. There's still a matter to be resolved about what exactly the new police force would be called and how it can be constituted so that both Protestants and Catholics will join the police force and be a part of the unified police force, and what the political problems this issue present to both sides are.

I think what the IRA did in agreeing to put these weapons beyond use and put them in these cachement areas and allow them to be inspected was a terrific step forward and a great credit to Gerry Adams and Michael McGuinness—Martin McGuinness—and everybody else who worked on it.

But we've got one last issue, and I don't think anybody ought to be celebrating until we resolve the one last issue.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sinn Féin leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Award Ceremony for the National Teacher of the Year

May 11, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Let me begin by welcoming you to the Rose Garden and saying, I'm grateful that it's not too hot and it's not too cold. Sounds like one of those books we used to read when I was 6 years old—it's just right. [Laughter] Actually, we got rained out here yesterday at an event. And we had two events earlier today, and it was quite warm. So this is—you're here at just the right time.

I'd also like to thank the representatives of the Marine Band who played for us today. This is their third event today, and they've done a great job. Thank you very much.

I want to thank Secretary Riley, my friend and co-worker for better education for well over 20 years now. Even my adversaries will concede that he is the finest Secretary of Education this country has ever had, and I am very grateful to him.

I welcome the other representatives of the Department of Education and the executive director of the Council of Chief State Schools, Gordon Ambach; Scholastic, Inc., Senior Vice President Ernie Fleishman and all those from Scholastic who are here. And I want to recognize the president of the National Education Association, Bob Chase, who has done a wonderful job representing all the teachers of our country here in Washington, including those in the AFT. And I think they would say the same thing. And we thank you for all the fights that you've waged for us, and with your friends in the AFT, and people who love education everywhere. We've had a good 7 years here, thanks in no small measure to you, sir. And we thank you very much.

We have here 54 or 55 State Teachers of the Year, 36 former National Teachers of the Year, and our present honoree, Marilyn Whirry of California. And I want to say a little more about her in a moment.

President Truman presented the first of these awards here at the White House almost half a century ago. And every year since, Presidents or members of their family have personally handed out this award to recog-

nize not only the awardee and the awardees but, indeed, all of our teachers. On that very first occasion, President Truman said, "Next to one's mother, a teacher has the greatest influence on what kind of a citizen a child grows up to be."

Every day, 5 days a week, 9 months a year, teachers have the future of America in their hands. They teach our children to read, to write, to calculate, to sing, to paint, to play, to listen, to question, to work with others, and to think for themselves. They excite our children's imagination, lift their aspirations, open their hearts, strengthen their values.

I imagine every one of us can recall the names and faces of teachers who influenced us profoundly; indeed, so profoundly that without them we wouldn't be sitting here or standing in the Rose Garden today. We tend to remember the teachers most who challenged us the most; the ones who held us to high standards and convinced us we could achieve; teachers who praised us when they knew we were doing our very best; and who motivated us, sometimes gently and sometimes not so gently, to do even better; teachers who watched with delight the amazement on our faces when we produced work we never imagined we were capable of.

For 35 years now, Dr. Marilyn Whirry has been that kind of teacher, instilling in her students a love of literature. Seniors at Mira Costa High School in Manhattan Beach, California, vie for spots in her advanced placement English class. Even freshmen and sophomores hope some day to join what are called the "Whirryites," in book-lined Room 19, to discuss Shakespeare and Camus, Toni Morrison and Dostoyevski.

Her teaching style, I understand, is like a softer, more nurturing version of Professor Kingsfield's in "The Paper Chase." She paces the room posing questions to each student, responding to each answer with still more questions, digging deeper and deeper into the toughest texts until their meanings are revealed. She believes there are no obstacles to learning that cannot be overcome through effort and high standards. And she lives by that belief.

A few years ago, she underwent treatment for cancer, yet almost never missed a day of work. She not only beat the cancer but that

year every one of her students passed the AP tests. She's traveled America giving workshops to educators on teaching standards-based reading and writing.

For the last 7 years, she's been Secretary Riley's appointee to the National Assessment Governing Board. I think I should point out that she was first appointed to NAGB by the previous administration, so admiration for her is bipartisan. *[Laughter]*

The role of teachers has never been more important to our society and our future than it is today—in a global economy that rewards what we know and what we can learn more than ever, with the largest and most diverse student population in our history, and with 2 million teachers set to retire in the next decade, and already a crying need to lower class sizes and modernize facilities.

Clearly, recruiting and retaining more and better teachers is one of the greatest challenges we face as a nation. And we see unusual efforts now being adopted all across the country. In the State of Mississippi, they just voted to raise teachers' salaries \$10,000. In California, they give big bonuses to people who come into teaching. And you'll see more and more of this as we recognize not only the imperative of having good teachers but also just the sheer challenge of replacing the retiring teachers as the corps of students continues to grow.

One of the things we have to do to meet that challenge is to do more to honor and respect our best teachers, like our honoree. Everyone who becomes a teacher recognizes on the front end that this is not the surest path to wealth. People who do it, in the end, do it and stay at it because they love it, because they find fulfillment in giving, in the spark of learning they see in children's eyes.

The least the rest of us can do is to pay them adequately, train them well, give them the facilities and support they need and the respect that they deserve. And that last intangible element was conclusion number one of the Survey of America's Top Teachers, released just this week by Scholastic, Inc., and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The survey also concluded if we want to recruit more and better teachers and hang on to those we have, we must pay them more.

More and more gifted young people start out teaching, but they don't stay as long as they used to, and that's a big challenge. Thanks to the longest running expansion in American history, most States have substantial budget surpluses now. They have to decide how best to use them. States, like the Nation, this year must decide what to do with this magic moment of prosperity in improving social conditions. If I were a Governor and I had a surplus, I'd give my teachers the pay they deserved, and I hope more and more States will do that.

We also know that the National Government has a role to play. I have proposed \$1 billion effort to help recruit, train, and support teachers, to invest more in teachers even as we demand more of them. I'm disappointed, yesterday, that Congress set in motion a budget that, I believe, strongly invests too little in our schools and expects and demands too little from them, a plan that ignores some of our schools' most pressing needs, from more well-trained teachers to more modern classrooms. We can and must do better, and we will.

Last week I took a school reform tour through four States. It was an amazing experience for me. I went to western Kentucky, and I went to Minnesota. I went to Iowa. I went to Ohio. I could have gone to anyplace, I suppose, and found much the same thing. But it was so moving for me to have a chance to demonstrate to the country, through the good offices of our friends in the media, that all children can learn and our schools are doing better. Test scores are up; many of our lowest performing schools are turning around.

Every teacher here today and every teacher across the country ought to be proud of the progress that is being made. You have proved that all students can learn. Now our task is to ensure that all students do learn, that they all receive the world-class education they need, they deserve, and the rest of us desperately need for them to have. If we continue to build on our progress, I have no doubt that we can fulfill that promise.

Let me just say one other thing about this that's not in the text, but one of the things that troubled me greatly when I became President in January of 1993 is that even a

lot of people who voted for me because they believed in what I was saying, didn't really believe we could turn the country around. They didn't really believe we would ever get rid of the deficit. They didn't really believe we would ever reduce the welfare rolls. They didn't really believe that we could make crime come down every year. And even though every single citizen knew some teacher that they just adored, they didn't really believe that on a sweeping national basis, we could improve the performance of our students. And now that we know, that imposes a special responsibility on us.

When I leave office, we're going to have paid off \$355 billion of the Nation's debt. We know we can get the country out of debt and still keep investing in education. We've got the crime rate coming down 8 years in a row; the welfare rolls are half what they were. But a lot of people still don't know that the schools, against increasing challenges, are doing better and better. And I'll just give you one example.

I was in Kentucky, in Owensboro, a little town in western Kentucky, in a school that was one of the 170 schools in 1996 identified as a low performing school. Within 2 years, 91 percent of the schools were off the list. As of last year, in 4 years, in a school with two-thirds of the kids eligible for free or reduced lunches, the number of children reading at or above grade level had gone from 12 to 57 percent; doing math at or above grade level had gone from 5 to 70 percent; doing science at or above grade level had gone from zero to 64 percent. The school ranked 18th in the State in overall performance, with two-thirds of the kids eligible for free or reduced lunch. And in Kentucky, 10 of the 20 best performing grade schools have over half the kids eligible for free or reduced lunch. Race, income, and region are not destiny, thanks to teachers and schools. And we need to get that out there.

And that's what you represent to me. You are the living embodiment that you get more from giving than taking in life. And I can't think of anybody who's given more. My only regret today is that I have never been in one of Marilyn Whirry's classes. [Laughter] So maybe we'll get the next best thing as I bring her up here and present her her award.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Teacher of the Year.

[At this point, the President presented the award to Ms. Whirry, who then made brief remarks and gave the President a crystal apple.]

The President. Thank you. Well, thank you. I have all kinds of questions I wanted to ask you, about Dostoyevski and Camus and—[laughter]

Ms. Whirry. Okay.

The President. —the last novel he wrote that's just been published. What did Toni Morrison mean when she said I was America's first black President? [Laughter] I thought it was a great compliment.

Let me tell you, I generally believe Presidents should not receive awards because the job is award enough. But I love this. And every day I have left here, this award will be on my desk in the Oval Office, and I hope you get to see it on television.

Thank you. Bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:28 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Statement on Congressional Action on Africa and Caribbean Basin Trade Legislation

May 11, 2000

I am pleased that Congress has completed action on historic legislation that will boost investment, growth, and opportunity in Africa and the Caribbean Basin, while improving the global competitive position of our own industries. This step reaffirms America's commitment to open trade and strengthens the partnership between the United States and our friends in Africa and the Caribbean Basin. It will encourage these nations to continue building open economies, bolster their efforts to alleviate poverty, and improve long-term prospects for democracy and stability around the world. I look forward to signing this measure into law and congratulate Members of Congress from both parties who have worked so hard to enact the "African Growth and Opportunity Act" and the Caribbean Basin trade enhancement legislation.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the “Conservation and Reinvestment Act”

May 11, 2000

I am very pleased by the overwhelming bipartisan vote in the House today to provide significant new resources to meet America’s critical conservation and recreation needs. Today’s vote on H.R. 701, the “Conservation and Reinvestment Act,” is a historic step toward achieving permanent conservation funding—a goal embodied in the lands legacy initiative I put forward in my budget this year. I applaud Chairman Young, Representative Miller, and others for their leadership on this effort.

We will continue working with Congress to secure protected and permanent conservation funding within the framework of a balanced budget that provides for critical budget and fiscal priorities, and with no burdensome or unnecessary restrictions on Federal authorities that have proven so effective in preserving America’s natural heritage. I urge the Senate to move swiftly on this legislation. I am confident that working together we can create a permanent conservation endowment that will be a true gift to future generations.

Statement on the Situation in Sierra Leone

May 11, 2000

U.N. Secretary-General Annan and I agreed this morning that the international community must intensify international efforts to restore peace in Sierra Leone and to prevent a return to all-out civil war. The situation there has been grave. But the U.N. is determined to fulfill its mission; African and other nations are willing to act; and we are ready to help them.

I have instructed our military to provide needed assistance to accelerate the deployment of troops to UNAMSIL and informed the U.N. that the United States will help transport reinforcements. A U.S. military transport aircraft is now in Jordan to move ammunition and supplies that are needed im-

mediately for the Jordanian elements in Sierra Leone.

We intend to support the commitment west African nations have made to send additional troops to Sierra Leone to restore peace. A U.S. military team is now in Nigeria to determine what assistance might be needed from the international community to outfit and transport these forces as quickly as possible.

I welcome the statement west African leaders made on Tuesday at their emergency summit in Abuja, Nigeria, calling for the release of all hostages and pledging to protect democratic institutions in Sierra Leone.

I have asked Rev. Jesse Jackson, my Special Envoy for Democracy in Africa, to return to the region to work with leaders there for a peaceful resolution of this crisis. Reverend Jackson has been actively involved in our diplomatic effort to help the people of Sierra Leone realize their peaceful aspirations.

Proclamation 7307—Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week, 2000

May 11, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

From our earliest days as a Nation, America has been blessed with citizens of courage and character who have dedicated their lives to keeping the peace in our communities. Five years after the creation of the U.S. Marshals Service in 1789, U.S. Marshal Robert Forsyth was shot and killed in the line of duty. He was the first of more than 14,000 law enforcement personnel since that time to give his life to uphold the law and protect the people he was sworn to serve.

Our Nation owes a lasting debt of gratitude to the men and women of our law enforcement community who, each day, put their lives at risk to protect us and ensure the safety of our families and homes. Because of their skill, valor, and commitment, we have begun to turn the tide on crime in America. The murder rate is at its lowest level in more than 30 years, and the overall crime rate is at its lowest point in 25 years. There are

many reasons for this progress, but police chiefs, policymakers, and citizens alike agree that the dedication of our law enforcement officers and the spread of community policing have been critical factors. Today, in cities and communities across America, residents and police officers are working in partnership, forming neighborhood watch organizations, banding together against drug dealers and gangs, and building connections that are the core of community life and the foundation of a civil society.

Unfortunately, we need look no further than the tragic losses suffered by law enforcement officers to recognize the risks that these brave men and women face every day. Last year, 50 police officers were struck down in the line of duty, and another 84 lost their lives in accidents. For these heroes, the safety of their fellow citizens was their purpose and passion, and they made the ultimate sacrifice to fulfill their duty.

We can never repay these gallant men and women for their service or adequately comfort their families. We can only honor their memory—not only in words and ceremony, but in our determination to promote justice, uphold the law, and preserve the peace and safety they helped purchase with their lives.

By a joint resolution approved October 1, 1962 (76 Stat. 676), the Congress has authorized and requested the President to designate May 15 of each year as “Peace Officers Memorial Day” and the week in which it falls as “Police Week,” and, by Public Law 103–322 (36 U.S.C. 136), has directed that the flag be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 15, 2000, as Peace Officers Memorial Day and May 14 through May 20, 2000, as Police Week. I call upon the people of the United States to observe these occasions with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities. I also request the Governors of the United States and of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as well as the appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag of the United States be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States

and all areas under its jurisdiction and control. I also invite all Americans to display the flag at half-staff from their homes on that day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:05 a.m., May 12, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 15.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Chemical and Biological Weapons Defense

May 11, 2000

Dear _____:

Attached is a report to the Congress on Chemical and Biological Weapons Defense, submitted pursuant to Condition 11(F) of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the United States Senate on April 24, 1997.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; John W. Warner, chairman, and Carl Levin, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Floyd Spence, chairman, and Ike Skelton, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services.

**Remarks in an Interview and
Townhall Meeting on ABC's
"Good Morning America"**

May 12, 2000

["Good Morning America" cohosts Charlie Gibson and Diane Sawyer welcomed program participants and described the goals of the Million Mom March against gun violence, scheduled for May 14th in Washington, DC.]

Charlie Gibson. We are here in the Oval Office with the President, who is joining us this morning. It's nice to have—nice to be here. I shouldn't say nice to have you with us, since it's your office. Mr. President, good to see you again.

The President. Good to see you.

Gun Safety Legislation

Mr. Gibson. Diane is going to go over with the mothers, and we understand you will join us in there in a few moments. But we'd like to talk a little bit first.

It as a year ago, Mr. President, that we were here with you with the students talking about gun violence. And you talked to me then about the hopes that you had for new gun control legislation. It hasn't happened. What went wrong?

The President. Well, nothing went wrong. We passed legislation in the Senate—Vice President Gore cast the tie-breaking vote to require child safety locks, to ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, which would make our assault weapons ban much more effective, and to require background checks when handguns are bought at gun shows and urban flea markets, just as they are now at gun stores.

It passed in the Senate; it didn't pass in the House. And frankly, I think it was because of the intense lobbying effort against it and the longstanding ability of the NRA to influence Congressmen. I think that that was a big part of it.

I think, also, the label "gun control" is not nearly as effective as the specific safety measures. I mean, if I said to you, let's take these seatbelts out of cars and repeal the speed limits and repeal the requirement that drivers get licenses because it's "car control," you might be against it, too. When you talk about

the specifics, do they make sense or not, do they work or not, the answer is yes.

Frankly, I still don't understand why anybody would be against these things. And the evidence is clear that it works.

Mr. Gibson. But the Congress is jammed up. I've got here a pile of all the gun legislation that's been proposed in the past year, since we were here before, and none of it has passed. By my count, we have more States rejecting new gun control legislation than have passed it. We have 15 States that have passed prohibitions on cities suing gun manufacturers. That hardly seems like progress.

The President. Well, first of all, I think you have to look at the fact that the States, which our Founding Fathers thought would be the laboratories of democracy, have seen some progress. If you look at what Maryland and California and Massachusetts have done—Maryland particularly is interesting because it is not what you would think of a socially or culturally liberal State, and people from very difficult districts passed some very tough child safety legislation. I think that there has been some movement at the State level.

In Colorado, a conservative Republican Governor proposed closing the gun show loophole, couldn't pass it through the legislature, and they're going to put it on the ballot. It will be interesting to see what the people of Colorado do.

I think that as a practical matter, until the public demonstrates its will on this, there may not be more substantive progress. The people are going to have to decide what they believe the right approach is.

Mr. Gibson. When we were here a year ago, you gave me a rather stern talking-to about the political realities on the issue of gun control. Isn't it fair to say that the political realities right now are that nothing is going to happen for this year, while people wait to see the results of the November election?

The President. I'm not sure. That is one possible outcome. It may be the more likely outcome. But keep in mind, you've still got bills that have passed the House and the Senate. Essentially what's happened is—though, that this is the part about Washington that

drives people crazy. We've got a version of this bill that passed the House, a version of this bill that passed the Senate. And the conferees are supposed to get together, both parties, both Houses, come up with a bill and send it to me; I sign it or veto it; and then they override the veto or they don't, if I veto it. That's the way the system is supposed to work.

As a practical matter, what happens is they're just not meeting, and because they don't want to report out a bill that, again, they can't label as "gun control," but it will have specifics, and people either like it or not, and it will either pass or not. That's what's frustrating. It's just been stalled. And I think the fact that what's really important about it is closing a loophole in a background check law that has plainly worked to save lives in America, closing a loophole in an assault weapons ban that the American people overwhelmingly support, and putting in child trigger locks—those are the three main elements—it's unconscionable that it hasn't been voted out.

Million Mom March

Mr. Gibson. As a practical matter, doesn't this administration have something of a stake in Sunday's march, hoping that some mothers can do politically what Columbine, what a preschool shooting out in California, what a 6-year-old shooting another 6-year-old didn't do, which is to create a gun control lobby as strong as the pro-gun lobby?

The President. Well, I think, as a practical matter, what we really have is hoping that these mothers will create a sense of awareness in America that this is not a debate framed the way the NRA has debated, gun control or not, implying that this is the beginning of a slippery slope to take people's guns away no matter how law abiding they are, and that it's about very specific, very concrete measures of prevention to reduce the likelihood of guns falling into the hands of children and criminals. That's what this is about.

Gun Safety and 2000 Elections

Mr. Gibson. You have made this very much a priority in this administration. Does it surprise you when you see the latest polls, Gallup poll, just out recently, indicating that

a plurality of this country actually thinks that Governor Bush would be stronger on gun control and better equipped to handle the issue than the Vice President?

The President. No, because I think the public doesn't have the information. I don't think there's any—I think if you gave—did the Gallup poll give the public a test about whether—which candidate was for the following specific measures? I think people form general impressions. And the Republicans, keep in mind, until our administration came in, because of their tough rhetoric and their theory that the answer to every crime was just to put more people in jail and keep them there longer, and they talked about it like that, they had the overwhelming advantage on all crime-related issues.

But it's not like there's no evidence here. I mean, crime has come down 7 years in a row—8 years in a row, now. This is the eighth year that crime is coming down. Partly it's due to the improved economy, but partly it's due to the fact that we put 100,000 police on the street, that we passed the Brady bill, that we passed the assault weapons, that we increased enforcement as well. No one can dispute the evidence.

And so what I think there is, when the campaign really starts in earnest, we need to make sure that voters have all the evidence, and then we'll see what they say.

Gun Safety Legislation

Mr. Gibson. Don't you to some extent make the NRA's case when you say that, though? They say, "Enforce existing laws; you're not doing enough of enforcing existing laws." And yet, you've got murder down 25 percent since '93, gun crime down 35 percent since '92, violent crime overall down 27 percent. That's done with a good economy, better policing, and not necessarily such stronger gun control laws.

The President. That includes the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, a ban on cop-killer bullets. They were against all those things. When we passed the Brady bill—keep in mind, the Brady law, which requires the background checks, was vetoed in the previous administration of President Bush. We passed it again, and I signed it. And what did they say? The same crowd here who is

against closing the gun show loophole, what did they say then? Then they said, because they were making a different argument, because they're against all prevention measures, they said then, "Oh, this Brady law won't make any difference because criminals do not buy guns at gun stores; they buy guns at these gun shows or flea markets or out of the back of pickup trucks on streets. It won't make any difference."

Okay, now it's 2000, and since we passed the Brady bill, over 500,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers have been unable to get handguns. There is no question that they used gun stores, and no question that the Brady bill made a difference, and no question it would be even better if all handgun sales were subject to background checks, including the ones at gun shows.

Now, so we're not arguing about that. If it's a prevention measure designed to keep more guns out of the hands of criminals, they're against it. If it's punishment for any kind of gun violation, they're for it. They say that this is the one area of American life where there must be no prevention and where people who own guns must be subject to no reasonable efforts to construct a system of prevention.

This is not gun control in the sense that we're taking people's guns away from them who make the decision that they'd be safer or better off to have guns or that they want to engage in a wide range of lawful activities. And that's really—they've been working this for a long time, and they're good at it. They just say the same things over and over again.

But why were they against this banning cop-killer bullets? Why were they against the Brady bill in the first place? Why were they against the assault weapons ban? What's wrong with banning the importation of large capacity ammunition clips? Let's get out of the name calling and labeling and get right down to specifics. Is this going to reduce crime or not in America? Is it going to make Americans safer? I think it is.

Million Mom March

Mr. Gibson. Let's get to the specifics of why the mothers are here to march. If you'd join us across the hall, we've got a number of mothers there anxious to talk to you.

Diane, let me go to you over in the Roosevelt Room.

Diane Sawyer. That's right, Charlie. Sitting in this room, I've noticed a lot of women nodding heads and shaking heads and bursting to ask questions. I'll give you a preview, just one question; what's it going to be?

[At this point, participant Linda Halpin asked why gun safety legislation had been held up in Congress for so long. Following a commercial break, Ms. Sawyer stated that the women assembled in the Roosevelt Room represented many sides of the issue, and some had personal stories of gun violence. Ms. Halpin then explained that her son was shot and killed last Mother's Day, and she asked the President what he could do to prevent such tragedies.]

The President. Well, first of all, the short answer is I'm going to do everything I can. In our country's history, as far as I know, no administration before ours has taken any kind of systematic, aggressive approach to this, except after Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were killed in 1968, President Johnson tried to do something. He tried to pass—he did pass a very weak background check law, not as strong as he wanted, and he tried to pass licensing. And since then, until we came in and began with the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, no one had done anything.

I have done as many townhall meetings as I could. I have lobbied the Congress as hard as I could. I've also taken a lot of executive action to strengthen the enforcement of the laws and to give us some options we didn't have before. But the truth is, in the United States, we have by far the highest gun death rate of any advanced country in the world and by far the highest accidental gun death rate in the world, because we have taken the position that any sort of sensible prevention measures here should not be passed, we—I say, we, as a people—and I think that's the wrong position.

So I've tried to change what would happen. I thought surely after Columbine we would get some action. The Senate passed, 51–50—the Vice President cast the tie-breaking vote—I think, a good bill that would aggressively move us forward. But there are

things we can do at the executive level without congressional action to continue to increase the effectiveness of the enforcement of the laws we have. And we're doing that.

But we don't have authority to require, for example, background checks on people that buy guns at gun shows or at flea markets. We have an assault weapons ban, but people can import large capacity ammunition clips and then adjust guns here and turn them into assault weapons. We have a few States that require safety locks on guns for kids. That's one thing that not many people talk about, but let me just say, the accidental rate of death from guns of children under 15 in the United States is 9 times higher than the accidental rate in the other countries combined.

So I am doing everything I can do. I am not a dictator. The Congress believes—I'll just tell you the truth—the Congress believes—ask Congresswoman McCarthy, she's paid a pretty high price for this—they believe that if they vote with the NRA, they will not be defeated. They believe if they vote with you, they may be defeated.

This is not complicated. You have to understand, they believe that as long—you know when Charlie Rose asked me about the poll—I mean, Charlie Gibson asked me about the poll—Charlie Rose normally asks me about other things—asked me about the poll in there. You have to understand what they believe. They believe that as long as they can turn it into a gun control, gun control, gun control debate and stay away from the specifics, they can scare a bunch of guys into thinking that they're going to lose their guns and that more people will vote against them for voting for gun control measures, if it's called that instead of the specifics, than vote for it.

Now look, I know you're heartbroken. I'm doing everything I can. Let me remind you that Mr. LaPierre, the representative of the NRA, said that I wanted people to die so I could make an issue out of this. That's what he said. Now, I can only tell you that I wake up every day thinking about this. I am heartbroken about this. And I am frustrated, because they do well if they can turn this into a gun control battle. We do well when we turn this into a specifics battle.

The thing that the mothers coming here will do, I hope, is to make this a voting issue. But if it's not, they're going to keep winning. And you just have to realize that.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, I want to interrupt you for just a second. We're supposed to take a commercial break here at this point, but we're going to keep going. And we just want to tell our local stations we want to keep going—because you want to follow up, I know.

[*Ms. Halpin said she needed accountability for her son's death and asked again what would the President do on the issue in his remaining days in office.*]

The President. Where are you from?

Ms. Halpin. I'm from New York, sir. Howard Beach.

The President. Well, I'm going to do my best to pass this legislation, and I'm going to do my best to make sure that we're enforcing the existing laws, and I'm going to do my best to find more people like you to tell your stories in the hope that more people in the Congress will be emboldened to do what, I believe, a majority of them think is the right thing to do.

This has been a big issue with me, and I have been very frustrated in my inability to get more done. We did—we got the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban through. I just want to tell you this. This is a very—you just need to know this. We have some people on the other side of this issue today, so I want to compliment them.

I got the first Congress I had to pass the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, and at least a dozen of them, maybe as many as 20 of them in the House lost their seats because they did that, trying to help people like you—because the NRA beat their brains out, because they went home to their districts and told people they were going to take their guns away. Now, 7 years later, none of them have lost their guns, and we've got a safer America. And so now they're fighting the new list of prevention measures. But you need to know what happened.

I know this hurts you. And I'm telling you, we're—ask Congresswoman McCarthy—we've been up here fighting this for all these years, and it is very, very frustrating.

Ms. Halpin. It still won't bring our children back.

The President. It won't bring your children back. But I'll tell you what will save more children, is if they believe people like you will mobilize other people to change the voting behavior of the American public. That is what will bring—[*applause*]. That's the truth.

I know this sounds so cruel in the face of your human loss. You have to understand how things work here. Look, I'm not running for anything. I'm doing what I think is right. I have taken on these facts; I have done everything I know to do. And you heard what Charlie said, gun violence is down 30 percent, gun crime, since I took office—35 percent. The crime rate is down, actually now, to about a 27-year low. The murder rate is down to a 30-year low.

We are making it better. But this is still way too dangerous a country because we take the position that when it comes to these issues, this is the only area of our national life where we will not have prevention. Now, that's really what—that is the truth. And it breaks my heart, too.

Gun Safety and 2000 Elections

[*Ms. Sawyer cited a newspaper report that Gov. George W. Bush of Texas proposed to distribute free trigger locks if he is elected President. Ms. Sawyer asked if the President would support such a program.*]

The President. It's a good idea, but why is he doing that?

Ms. Halpin. And why now?

The President. No, no, wait—yes, that's good—that's also good. Why now? Because he's running for President. That's okay. That's what elections are for. People get better ideas all the time. We can't hold people—anybody who wants to join and start doing things should be complimented. So that's fine.

But I think you have to understand what's going on here. There was a report in the newspaper last week that a lobbyist for the NRA said they would have an office in the White House if Governor Bush is elected. And they were, I think, the first or second biggest contributor to the annual Republican Party gala last week. So he wants to move

away from that image; he wants people not to think that he won't do anything, that basically the NRA will control policy on this—which they will if he wins. And if he comes out and gives away gun trigger locks, then he doesn't have to explain why we're still importing large capacity ammunition clips and why he doesn't want to close the gun show loophole.

I know you have people here from Texas who believe that their concealed weapons law is very effective. I know that, and we could talk about that if you like. But the truth is that everybody is going to want to look like they're doing something, but the most effective measures are opposed by most of the people in the Republican Party. I wish that weren't true. We do have some support from them, and I thank those who are supporting us.

State Concealed Weapons Laws

[*Ms. Sawyer said that representatives of the Second Amendment Sisters, who plan a counter-march to the Million Mom March, were also present. She introduced Texas State Representative Suzanna Gratia Hupp, an advocate of concealed weapons laws. However, a video clip about her which was to be shown had technical difficulties.*]

Mr. Gibson. Well, Suzanna, where are you? Why don't you give me a basic of what happened in that restaurant.

[*Ms. Hupp described the subject of the video, an episode in Texas where a man drove his truck through a restaurant window and then shot 23 people.*]

The President. I remember that.

[*Ms. Hupp said she had stopped her former practice of carrying a concealed weapon illegally out of fear of losing her chiropractic practicing license. She stated that her parents were killed by the man in the truck and that laws against carrying a concealed weapon had left her defenseless in that situation.*]

Mr. Gibson. And you are now in the state-house of Texas?

Ms. Hupp. Yes, sir, I am.

Mr. Gibson. And there is now a concealed weapons law in the State of Texas.

Ms. Hupp. Yes.

The President. Okay. First of all, let's concede something. She might be right about this. That is, on this particular incidence, if there had been someone in that restaurant who knew how to use a gun and was lawfully carrying it, for example, an off-duty police officer or somebody—or in a State with a concealed weapon law, someone who was properly trained and had it, maybe they could have stopped this horrible incident.

There is no law that covers every set of facts. However, what the truth is in most instances is, is that a lot of people have guns who don't know how to use them. And the accidental death rate in America is—again I will say this—9 times higher than that in the next 25 biggest countries combined. So it's a question of what makes you safest overall.

But my view of the concealed weapons law is, if a State wants to have one, what do people have to prove to carry a concealed weapon? How well have they been trained? How likely are they to avoid doing something crazy, so that they're only used in cases like this?

But the second thing is, whether you've got a concealed weapons law or not should have nothing to do with whether you close the loophole in the background check, whether you ban the large capacity ammunition clips, and whether you require child trigger locks, including those that are built into the guns, assuming they're feasible.

She may be right about this, about this example. But I don't think that example is an argument against our legislation.

Gun Safety Legislation

[Ms. Sawyer noted that the Second Amendment Sisters said there was no evidence of a correlation between increased gun control laws and a decrease in violence, using England as an example.]

The President. Wait, wait a minute—an increase of violence from a very low base.

Ms. Sawyer. From a low base.

The President. From a low base. In America, I will say again—forget about the crimes, just look at the accidental gun rate. In America, the death rate of children under 15 from accidental gun violence is—I will say

again—9 times higher than that in the next 24 biggest industrial countries put together.

So we say, in order to avoid inconveniencing people who have firearms or might want to get firearms, we will not have sensible prevention measures, because it scares everybody because we'll call it gun control. Now, that's a decision we've made as a society.

Look, there is no perfect system. The level of violence will depend upon the kind of people you have in your society, the condition of the economy, the way the children are raised, the values of the society, the values of the community, the effectiveness of law enforcement—there are many factors involved here. And there is no perfect system. But there is no question that if we want to become the safest big country on Earth, without impinging on our freedom, we will have to do more in the area of prevention.

National Rifle Association Board Member Susan Howard. Excuse me, could I ask a question if it's all right?

The President. Sure.

Ms. Sawyer. And we should point out, you are Susan Howard.

Ms. Howard. Yes, I am. I would like to ask this lady—

Ms. Sawyer. Let's tell people, Susan, who you are, those who don't know you. You've seen her in the ads for the NRA.

Ms. Howard. Yes, for the child safety. Was your son killed accidentally with a gun, or was it a crime?

Ms. Halpin. It was a crime.

Ms. Howard. Mr. President, I really have to ask you something. You just made the statement that just sent shivers up and down my spine. You said, let's forget the crimes and—

The President. No—

Ms. Howard. No, no, no, sir, excuse me—

The President. This is the way the NRA operates.

Ms. Howard. No, sir, it's not. No, sir—

The President. All I did is—I don't want to forget the crimes—

Ms. Howard. No, sir, you said, let's forget the crime and talk about the accidents—because there is nobody that—

The President. You know that's not what I meant, to forget the crime, Ms. Howard.

Ms. Howard. But that's what you said, Mr. President. And I guess this is——

The President. Well, what I—I was making the prevention——

Ms. Howard. No, sir, let me finish.

The President. All right.

Ms. Howard. Please, may I finish, because you have a bully pulpit. And I know every single person here in this room, the majority of them, are really for you, and they love you, and they trust you, and they believe you. But we are right now living in a country, sir, where our children—it's not how many gun laws you can continue to pass; it's about my grandchildren; it's about their children; it's about your daughter and whether she ever has any children or not. Bottom line, the issue is about are we ever, ever, ever, ever going to look at the children and say, that's the focus? Because right now what this is all about is the children have been pushed out of the side, they do not exist right now——

Mr. Gibson. Get to the question.

Gun Safety Legislation

Ms. Howard. No, what I'm saying is, if we—you are the education President, am I correct? Are you the education President? That is what you have built your——

The President. Well, that's what the teachers said yesterday when they all came here.

Ms. Howard. I agree, but I think that's what you built your platform on. What is it about educating children and gun safety that you have a problem with?

The President. Nothing. Now, wait a minute. Charlie, I have to answer this. On many occasions—not one, many occasions—I have complimented, as President, in the face of all the criticism I've gotten from the NRA, on many occasions I have complimented the NRA on the gun safety legislation, efforts they've made, the gun safety education programs. I have talked about what they did when I was Governor. I've also complimented them on some other things they did when I was Governor to reduce violence—but wait a minute, let me finish.

I think the laws should be more vigorously enforced. I have asked for more resources to do that. Gun enforcement is up since I've been President. But I've asked for resources to do more.

Look, here's my argument. Let me just be very careful here. I do not believe that America has done enough on the prevention side. And I do not believe this problem can be addressed solely by stiffer punishment, by education, and in the case of the Texas, if a State wants to have a concealed weapons law. I believe we must do more to try to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and away from children in the first place. That's all I said. That's my only position.

But I think the NRA, the education programs, the gun safety education programs, are good and would do a lot of good.

Mr. Gibson. Susan, let me address this. Marjorie Hardy is here——

Ms. Sawyer. Marjorie Hardy of Muhlenberg College—she is a psychologist——

Mr. Gibson. ——and assistant professor who worked—Marjorie, if I quote you correctly—you worked with your children on education over and over again, correct?

Ms. Hardy. That's correct——

Mr. Gibson. And you used those children as part of an experiment that we did on "20/20."

Ms. Sawyer. ——which we did at "20/20." And we also had the Eddie Eagle education program come in. And we were talking with kids about how—what you do when you see a gun in the room, specifically. And they all sat there and nodded, yes, they got it, you get an adult, you don't touch it, you don't touch it, including Marjorie's son, Matthew, who had grown up with nothing but education against guns.

I'm going to roll the clip. And what happened with Marjorie's son was a traditional—or typical with what happened with the other kids as well. And we found that the education, by and large, didn't work with this age kid. Here is Marjorie's son, Matthew.

The President. How old is your son?

Ms. Sawyer. He was age 4 at the time.

[A video tape was shown.]

Ms. Sawyer. And I want to point out, Marjorie, that the kids knew these were not

toy guns. You could hear them saying, "This is a real gun," and reacting to the fact that it was a real gun. Anything you want to add?

[*Ms. Hardy asked what evidence the NRA had to prove their Eddie Eagle gun safety education program was effective. Ms. Howard responded that the NRA did not claim to have the only answer to the gun violence problem, but that education was an imperative.*]

Parental Responsibility

Ms. Sawyer. —I engage the President on this issue, if I can, this question of parental responsibility and parental role in general. If I can just move to that. When you talk about everybody being responsible, the question really becomes, are there just too many guns out there for parents to be able to maintain control?

Participants. Yes!

Ms. Sawyer. And what do you do about your neighbors? And I'm going to show you a tape, and then we're going to meet Lori Smith, because this is the story of what happened to her daughter, Shannon.

Let's see if we have the tape.

[*There were technical difficulties with the video tape.*]

Ms. Sawyer. I'm going to go to Lori and let you tell us what happened.

[*Ms. Smith said that while her 14-year-old daughter was talking on the telephone in her backyard last June 14, a bullet fell from the sky and killed her instantly. Ms. Smith noted people in the Phoenix, AZ, area where she lives often fire guns randomly into the air in celebration or for other reasons.*]

Ms. Sawyer. And random accidental shootings, as we know, take place by the thousands all the time. Mr. President, what about the guns out there?

The President. Well, here's a case—of course, that probably is illegal. And if it isn't, it should be.

Ms. Smith. It was only a misdemeanor two—

The President. Did they ever find out who did it?

[*Ms. Smith said the shooter was not found, but she fought the Arizona State Legislature*

to elevate the penalty to a felony, with great opposition from the NRA. She then noted that the law changing the crime to a felony offense was signed April 3.]

The President. There's a case—let me just say this. First, I'm very sorry about what happened. It's a terrible thing. And I think what you did in the legislature was a good thing. But I think there's a case where people really do need to be sensitized to the fact that bullets that go up will come down. I think there are some of these things where a public campaign to educate people would make a difference. And that's one I think would make a difference.

The larger question for me, going back to this question of whether there are too many guns in the society—I think that sometimes there's a lot of loose talk about this. We ought to talk specifically about what we mean. A lot of these—most of the guns in America are in the hands of hunters and sports people and law enforcement people, are those guns—most of the guns that are in those people's hands, I think, they're safe, and they're going to be properly used.

But there's a huge sort of sea of guns that's out there just kind of flowing around. And that's one of the reasons I think that all the sales have to be checked, there has to be a background check on all the sales; and one of the reasons I support these gun buyback programs that a lot of cities are doing. And we're trying to put more money into it now, as well, because—[*inaudible*—]are law-abiding citizens, and you've got as many of these loose weapons as you can off the street.

Is your film on now? Are they trying to get it on now?

Ms. Sawyer. No, no, I think we've got you in an echo chamber there for a moment.

We're going to take a break, in fact, Mr. President. And when we come back, we can explore more issues of, do we hold the parents accountable? To what extent? In what ways?

The President. Yes, I think you should. I think you should.

[*Following a commercial break, Mr. Gibson asked if representatives on either side of the issue opposed laws enforcing parental responsibility.*]

Participant. I have a caveat to it, though.

Mr. Gibson. All right, but basically not opposed. Because I want to get the question to the President. People seem to believe in this bill, and yet it's a law in only 17 States, and in only 3 States is it a felony.

The President. And we couldn't get it in the legislation here. Representative McCarthy just pointed out that that was the one provision in my bill I couldn't get in either the Senate or the House version. So I think maybe—this is something that is encouraging to me, because what you saw on that film with those young children, below a certain age you can't expect an education program to work; you have to keep the guns away from the kids.

I think that's something we could all agree on, we could get done here. That's very important. And I think the adults should be held responsible.

Mr. Gibson. And yet when you proposed it on a national level, neither House or Senate—

The President. In the Kayla Rollins case, there is no question in my mind that if there had been responsible adults in that home, that child would be alive today.

Ms. Sawyer. That is the Michigan case, we should point out, where a 6-year-old boy killed a 6-year-old classmate.

Gun Registration

Mr. Gibson. A question here. Your name?

[Donna Dee-Thomases, organizer of the Million Mom March, said that education was important but that licensing firearms, as one would an automobile, was equally important so that guns used in crimes could be more easily traced.]

Mr. Gibson. Comment on the registration—

The President. I think—let me back up and say, we cannot pass in this Congress licensing of handgun owners, which I have proposed. I think when people buy a handgun, they ought to pass a Brady background check, have a gun safety education program, and have a photo ID license, just like when you have a car. That's what I believe.

And the registration of guns, the main virtue of that would be that you could trace

them when they were used in a crime. If I steal your car, Charlie, and I drive it down to Maryland and rob a bank, and I leave it in a shopping center parking lot, and it's found, because the registration is on the National Crime Information Center computer system, you can find out within literally 30 seconds after it's found what happened to your car.

But we can't even pass a bill to close the loophole in the Brady law when we know the Brady law has kept 500,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns in the first place. So we can't pass that now. But should it be done? Well, of course it should be done.

Gun Safety Locks

[Following a commercial break, Ms. Sawyer asked how many participants opposed gun safety locks.]

Participant. Safety locks, or a law that requires safety locks?

Ms. Sawyer. Okay. How many of you are for mandatory safety locks? And how many of you are for only voluntary? All right, we almost have a consensus issue there. At least safety locks should be on guns, one way or the other.

Mr. Gibson. You have a comment over here.

Lawsuits Against Gun Industry

[Johnny Mae Robinson from New York stated that her son was killed last year and asked if cities would continue to have the right to sue the gun industry.]

The President. Well, I think we should. And we supported the development of that lawsuit. But there is a move on by the gun manufacturers and their allies to try to get State legislatures to prohibit cities from being able to bring such suits, and their theory is—I'll make their case for them real quick—they say, "If a gun is a legal product, it's wrong to be able to sue the person who makes it."

The other side of the argument is there is—if you look at the way the guns are marketed and sold, a relatively large percentage of guns used in crimes and used illegally are sold by a relatively small number of the gun

dealers in America, and there is some evidence that the people who distribute the guns know that and do it anyway. And that's basically the argument behind the lawsuit.

And lawsuits are supposed to find facts, and this is the fact-finding process we're going to find, to see if a change in these policies, again, would make us safer. That's what it's about. Do I think they ought to have the right to bring the suit? I do, and I have supported it, and I've done what I could to protect it.

Trigger Locks

Ms. Sawyer. On that front, Mr. President, I'm going to give the microphone to Lynn Dix, who has a story to tell.

[*Ms. Dix said that she was suing a gun manufacturer because her son would still be alive if the gun that killed him had been equipped with an integral trigger lock or load indicator. She concluded that she cannot understand opposition to prevention measures.*]

The President. I think one of the most troubling things that I've seen in this whole episode is a lot of the people who are opposed to what I want to do say these things should be voluntary, trigger locks should be voluntary—let me just finish—because I'm where you are on this. So Smith & Wesson comes along and they say, "Okay, we'll put the trigger locks in, and we'll stop dealing with bad dealers, and we'll do other things which we think will help." And they didn't lose a lawsuit to do it; they came in on the front end and said they were going to do it.

And there was the awfulest reaction to them. They were treated like they had betrayed the country, like they had committed treason, and other gun manufacturers and everybody, they gave them a gut shot—it was unbelievable what happened, the reaction to them. And this is something where a free corporation decided they would change their policy in ways that plainly would make America a safer place. And the reward they got was having the other gun manufacturers and some of their allies just try to literally take their heads off. And I think it was wrong. I think what they did was the right thing.

Conclusion

[*Mr. Gibson invited the President to summarize the meeting, noting the President's earlier statement that he thinks about this issue more than any other.*]

The President. Domestic—yes, because it's the one we have made the least—we have both made the most progress on, but we've got a long way to go. And I think about it also because I grew up in a culture where more people thought like the minority here in this room who are in dissent.

Last weekend I was up in the Ozark Mountains, and I stopped at this little country store in the middle of the Ozarks. The last time I was there, 10 years ago, it was because I was out on a turkey hunt. Most of the people I spent time with were either, if they weren't members of the NRA—when I was hunting, you know, duck hunting, or whatever—they had favorable opinions. As I said, when I was Governor, I had both good and one horrible experience with the NRA.

But my view of this is, I think we all have to realize we don't—none of us claim that any of our positions are absolute and that we can make a perfect world, and nobody will ever get hurt, no bad person will ever get a hold of a gun, nothing wrong will ever happen. The people who are coming here to Washington, including many people in this room who have lost members of their families, understand that not every law they're advocating might have saved the particular life of the particular loved one they lost. Their loss got them interested in this, and they began to ask themselves: How can we make a safer country? How can we save more children like my children? How can we save more loved ones like my loved one?

I think, in fairness, the people who oppose them are good people. They really believe, I think—I don't know if they'll say it, but maybe after I'm gone they will—I think they think we have some—we either are weak on enforcement or we have some dark hidden agenda to take guns away from everybody, including lawful gun owners. And they think that would change America forever for the worse.

I don't have that agenda. I have never proposed any such rule. What I've tried to do,

I'll say again, is I think that this area of our national life is an area where—to go back to the very first question I was asked—where I think we should not rest until we think we have done everything we can to prevent bad things from happening in the first place.

Every other area of our national life we first choose prevention. Then if things go haywire, we punish. This should not be the area where we say, "Because we're worried about people doing something someday that's bad, we're not going to have prevention; we'll just start with punishment. But we'll be for education, but we'll start with punishment." That's my whole take on this.

I think we could do a lot more on prevention, make it a lot safer country, and achieve the objectives of the Million Mom March, which is that all these women that are here, they want fewer stories like theirs. That's my own take on this.

So I just wanted to put this into context. I want you all to talk to each other when I leave. I've talked too much here. I learn more when I listen.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, thank you very much.

The President. Thank you all very much.

Ms. Sawyer. Thanks for letting us stay in the house while you're away. [*Laughter*]

The President. It's your house, not mine. I'm just passing through. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The interview segment of the program, entitled "GMA Live at the White House: Moms & Guns," began at 7 a.m. in the Oval Office. The townhall meeting segment originated from the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Gov. Bill F. Owens of Colorado; Representative Carolyn McCarthy; news talk show host Charlie Rose; and Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Ohio Representatives of the Million Mom March and an Exchange With Reporters in Akron, Ohio

May 12, 2000

Good morning everyone. I have just had the opportunity to meet this fine group of

mothers who are leading Ohio's participation in Sunday's Million Mom March for commonsense gun safety laws. I want to thank them for their commitment, their determination, and their courage. What they are doing is profoundly important.

Like millions of mothers all over America, they are outraged by the senseless acts of gun violence that continue to plague our communities, and they are determined to do something about it. Every day, nearly a dozen of our children are killed by guns. Twelve families suffer a wound that never heals. What is almost as senseless is the fact that Congress refuses to act on legislation that would prevent many of these shootings.

These moms will be marching in Washington and in more than 60 other cities on Mother's Day to say to Congress, enough is enough. It is unconscionable that over a year after Columbine, over 10 months since they've had a chance to send me meaningful legislation, Congress still refuses to act.

Well, they can ignore my requests to move. They can ignore the evidence that commonsense prevention won't cost any law-abiding citizen a gun but will save lives. But this Sunday they will not be able to ignore the fact that the voices of more than one million moms across America will be demanding action.

The great sociologist Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." The women who are organizing this march are such a group of thoughtful citizens. They understand they have to be in this for the long haul. They understand that they have a lot of work to do.

But the evidence is on their side. The arguments are with them. And the power is on the other side. The whole story of America is the story of bringing down established walls of power in the face of argument and evidence, and passionate commitment to liberty and to the dignity of individuals. That's what the Million Mom March represents. I'm honored to be here with them today, and again, I thank them for what they will be doing in Ohio.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, do you think that the march will have the kind of impact that will break this logjam and get some gun control legislation through this Congress?

The President. The honest answer to that is, I don't know. But I think it will have a seminal impact in the nature of this debate, because for a very long time now, large majorities of the American people have been for commonsense prevention legislation that has nothing to do with infringing on the right to keep arms, to bear arms, to hunt, to sports shoot, to keep weapons in self-defense, but has everything to do with keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and children. Notwithstanding the fact that lopsided majorities of our people favor these specific measures, they don't pass because of the intensity, power, and wealth of the organized opposition to it.

So I think what these folks are saying is, you know, we want to save more lives. We're not trying to take anything away from what those people legally have who disagree with us. But we don't intend to let them take away our chance for prevention and safety anymore. And that is the beginning of the shift in the balance of forces in our society. That's how change always occurs.

So if they stay at this, they will prevail, because the evidence is on their side, the human element is on their side, and because they're not trying to take anything away from the other people. All they're trying to do is to protect our society from criminal acts and from avoidable accidents.

There are lives at stake. I think they will prevail. I hope they will prevail this year. I hope we will be able to prevail upon the leaders of the conference to meet and work again. But even if they don't win this battle, they'll win over the long run, because they are galvanizing public opinion around specific reforms that will make America a better place and will give a lot of kids their lives.

Smith & Wesson and Gun Safety Legislation

Q. Mr. President, a \$300,000 grant was given out to Smith & Wesson to do research on smart gun technology. Aren't some folks who see that as a pay-off to that company

for signing—What do you see as the status of that—

The President. Well, I think first of all, Smith & Wesson did a good thing in making this agreement. And I think it's very—if you look at what they, what did they agree to do? They agreed to attach child safety locks; they agreed to make internal child safety lock mechanisms on their guns as soon as they could do so technologically, which could not be dismantled by the kids; and to work on smart gun technology, which would enable guns to be fired only by the adults who lawfully own them.

They agreed to—this is perhaps most important in the short run—they agreed to change the way they market and distribute their guns to avoid that relatively small number of dealers who sell a very high percentage of the guns that go to people who use them in crimes. Now, I would think that that would have been well-received by everybody. But instead, the other gun manufacturers and their allies have subjected Smith & Wesson to withering, withering criticism.

But the answer to your question is no. I don't think it'll be seen as a pay-off, because it's nowhere near as much money as it will cost them, given the reaction of the rest of the gun industry to what they're trying to do. And we have to have someone in the industry help us with this research; just by the nature of it, it has to be done. And I can assure you, there was never any quid pro quo or discussion of it. This all came up later. We need to have some allies in the gun industry who really do believe that prevention is an important part of a safe future for America.

And I hope that Smith & Wesson will keep all the components of the agreement they made. They have certainly paid an enormous price for doing it. I mean, it's truly been breathtaking to see the reaction against them by the other gun manufacturers and their allies.

Yes, sir?

Q. Mr. President, is there room for any compromise in this legislation? And if so, in what area?

The President. Well, let me give you an example of what I—what we've got before the Congress right now. I think we can work out language on the child trigger locks. I

would hope that we could get a big majority for banning the import of large capacity ammunition clips. Surely there is not a constituency for that. There has been absolutely no disruption whatever from our banning of assault weapon. But if you let them import these large capacity ammunition clips, then you can modify existing guns here and turn them into assault weapons.

The hangup—and this is interesting to me—the hangup is that the NRA is basically opposed to doing the background checks at gun shows unless they're insta-checks. Now, Ohio is a big State, with a lot of large cities spread across the State, and then an awful lot of small towns and rural areas. Their argument is, a lot of these gun shows are held on the weekend. You know, if somebody comes in and wants to buy a gun, it's a real hassle to wait 3 days for the background checks. Is there a way to work this out?

Well, here's my theory about it. Everybody who clears the insta-check, let them buy the gun. Seventy percent of the people clear the insta-check in a couple of minutes; 90-plus percent within a day, same day as the gun show occurs. But of the less than 10 percent who don't clear it, their rejection rate, because of a problem in their background, principally, a criminal problem, is 20 times higher than the 90 percent of the people that do clear.

So what we've been unwilling to do so far is to say if we don't clear—see, what the NRA position is, if they don't clear in a day, we ought to give that last 9 percent or 8 percent or however many—they ought to be able to take the guns home, even if they don't clear within a day. And my position is, why would we defend a population that's less than 10 percent of the total, that's more than 20 times likely to have committed a crime and be ineligible to get a gun, than the rest of the 90 percent?

So it looks to me like we could work an agreement that covers the rest of the 90 percent, and then on the 9 percent, it seems to me it's quite important to do that. And—you know, let me tell you, that would—even that is a compromise from what would be the optimal, and here's why. Suppose a custody order or a stop order is listed in a domestic dispute that's very violent, on a Friday

afternoon. It can't possibly be in anybody's computer yet. If you let the insta-check control that, then a lot of people will get cleared—not a lot, but a small number that could be violent—could be cleared anyway.

So our people, representing our position through Mr. Conyers from Michigan, have, I think, made quite a reasonable proposal. And I'm hoping that we'll keep working on it. I think if we just had to work it out in the House, we could probably do it. But right now, the Senate—where, ironically, where we passed a stronger bill—but Senator Hatch and the Senate conferees are essentially refusing to go forward with us on this.

So—I didn't mean to give you too long and detailed an answer, but you need to know that what's so sad about this is I think we could do the child trigger locks; I think we could do the assault weapons ban. And I think—it seems unbelievable to me that we would be hung up here on this background check at the gun shows in a way that affects less than 10 percent of the gun buyers, but they're 20 times more likely to have a problem in their background. It's very important that everybody understand that. If we could just get focused on that. I can't believe we couldn't figure out a way to work this out.

Now, there's much bigger opposition to what—the larger legislative goals of the Million Mom March, but I think they're absolutely right. As you know, I favor—for example, I think if somebody buys a handgun, they ought to get a license, like a car license. It ought to be a photo ID license. It ought to show that they passed a background check and that they passed a gun safety check, just like you do when you get a car. That's what I think.

So I'd like to see the short-term goals resolved this year, and I want them to keep on pushing, because there is so much we can do. We can make America the safest big country in the world and still have people out there hunting and sports shooting, even having weapons for protection if they thought they needed them in their homes. But we can't do it without more prevention.

National Support for Gun Restrictions

Q. Mr. President, what do you think of polls which suggest that support for gun restrictions are wavering among men, and they tend to be more sympathetic to—

The President. If you read—let me just say this. First, I agree with that. But I think we've got to put it into some perspective.

If you go back and look at the data from the Pew Research survey, they do show that men, particularly men over 55, have been affected by the claims of the NRA and the advertising that the rights of legitimate gun owners are threatened. But they also show that a majority, a significant majority of the people, still respond that we need further gun control measures.

The real problem is whether you talk in general terms about gun control, or whether you talk in specific terms about closing the gun show loophole, banning large capacity ammunition clips, imposing child trigger locks, or licensing gun owners. If you give people the specifics, there are still 70 percent of the people with us, maybe more.

But the labeling fears—because it scares people. I said the other day to our staff, I said, this is weird. That's why the people who oppose our position, they always want to talk about more gun control and imply that the rights of hunters and sports people are threatened. And they use that label.

But you know, when we talk about the speed limits on automobiles or people having to get a license to drive their cars or laws that require you to use your seat belts or put in the right kind of baskets, child safety restraint seats—you know, all those things are laws. You want to drive a car, and you want to put your child in the car. They're all laws. Nobody talks about car control. And you have a constitutional right to travel, too, you know. The Supreme Court says you've got a constitutional right to travel. No one says car control is threatening our constitutional right to travel.

So I think that what we should do is, instead of having these label wars, we should calm down, lower the rhetoric, and say, what is it that we have proposed? What is it that they are advocating? Would it make us safer? Would it prevent more crimes and more acci-

dental deaths and injuries? Does it infringe the Constitution?

My answer is, look at the facts of what they're advocating. Would it make us a safer country? Absolutely. Would it infringe the Constitution? Absolutely not. Therefore, we ought to do it. I think if we just calm this down and look at the facts, we'll prevail.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. outside the Ohio Army/National Guard Facility. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Opening Remarks at a Roundtable Discussion on Permanent Normal Trade Relations Status for China in Akron

May 12, 2000

Thank you. First of all, I'd like to thank Congressman Sawyer for inviting me here today, and I thank all of you for joining us. I know we have people here who have a lot of different views on this China issue, but I think that's important. I think this is a big part of what makes our democracy work is that we sit and try to talk through these things.

I've got a few notes here that are specific to Ohio, so I'd like to just go over them. Obviously, I've spent a lot of time on this trade agreement with China, which was negotiated in order to let them in the World Trade Organization. And in order for us to benefit from its provisions, we have to grant them normal trading status on a permanent basis. For the last 20 years, ever since the formal opening of China in 1979, we've been doing it on an annual basis. So this—I want to make sure we understand, the decision before Congress is whether to go from an annual review of their trade relationships with us, to give them permanent normal trading status—that is, the same status that virtually every other country in the world enjoys.

Now, it's important to recognize that whatever you think the long-term consequences are, the short-term consequences are all running in our favor, because today we have a very large trade deficit with China, and they have very large tariffs and other barriers to

our doing business with them. What this does is, they take down a lot of their barriers to trade and investment with America in return for membership in the World Trade Organization, which puts them in the global trading system and requires them to follow certain rules and gives us some way to appeal if they don't follow those rules. But what they get is membership in the club. What they give us are membership dues. That's the way you have to look at this. And the access, on purely economic terms, is, I think, quite impressive.

Today, Ohio is the leading State in machinery exports. Two-thirds of the industrial workers in this State have jobs that benefit in whole or part from exports. In the last 5 years—or from '93 to '98—Akron's exports to China have more than doubled. Over the same period, Ohio's exports to China also more than doubled. And this involves almost every sector of the Ohio economy. It's over \$350 million now.

So if this passes—Secretary Glickman can talk about it later as well—there will be huge new markets for agriculture, new markets for automobiles, new markets for high-tech equipment, new markets for telecommunications equipment. We will be able for the first time, for example, to sell cars there or sell auto parts there without either having to put a manufacturing plant in China or transfer manufacturing technology. That's never been possible before. And the tariffs will drop on average in some of these areas, say, from 25 percent to 10 percent over a period of just a few years. So it's a big—it's in every way an economic winner.

In addition to that, you should know that last April, a year ago, we had most of this, but not all this agreement. And I consulted with, among others, the AFL-CIO and other people who were concerned about whether the economics work out fairly, and they asked me to go back and get some new provisions about our trade relations, so that if China dumped a lot of products into our market in a certain area, which threatened a lot of jobs, we could take immediate and quick action. I did that; that's why we didn't get this agreement last April.

I went back—China has now agreed to give us the right, for more than a decade, to move against them on a bilateral basis if

there's trade injury in America. And the standard of proof we have to make is lower than the standard of proof we have to make under our laws for every other country in the world. And they agreed to this. They agreed to allow us to bring action against them if there's severe dislocation of our markets under a standard of proof lower than we have for any other country in the world, which is what I was asked to do, and we got that, against surges of imports and dumping and things like that.

So I think it is a good deal economically. But I have to tell you, I think it's more important for our national security. Why? Because if we let China in the WTO, they will be inside the world trading system. They will have a strong interest in working with other people and cooperating with other people. They will have a strong disincentive not to have trouble with Taiwan, even though there's a lot of tension between the two of them, as all of you have heard. And I think we'll be able to continue to work with them and relate to them and make progress on a whole range of other fronts.

I think it's quite interesting that most, not all, but most of the human rights activists in China, most of the democracy activists in China are for this agreement. There was a big article on the cover of one of our—I think the Washington Post, yesterday on the front page, where they'd gone and actually interviewed dissidents in China who were severely alienated from the Government, and everybody they interviewed said, "Please do this. If you don't do this, America won't have any influence over the Chinese. You'll never be able to help us. We'll never be able to move forward. We'll be isolated; we'll be more repressed."

Martin Lee, the long-time democracy advocate in Hong Kong—who can't even go to China, has never met the Premier of China, for example, Zhu Rongji—in America last week said, "You have to do this. If you don't vote for this, you have no influence. You can't help me. Nothing will happen. And the chances of something bad happening in China will be much greater." The President-elect of Taiwan, who has previously advocated independence from China, wants us to vote for this.

Now, there are people in China who don't want this to pass. The most militant elements in the military, the most traditional elements, the people who control the state-owned industries—they don't want this to pass, because they know if they open up China, their control will be undermined. and in one of the great ironies of this whole trade debate, I've never—it's an unusual thing to see that some of the most progressive people in our country are taking a position that is supported by only the most regressive people in their country. Because they know that isolation helps them to maintain control and the status quo.

I honestly believe this is by far the most important national security vote we will take this year. I think if we pass it, it will strengthen and stabilize our position in Asia and reduce the likelihood of conflict, even war, there for a decade. I think if we don't pass it, it will increase the chances that something bad will happen.

That's not a threat, and goodness knows if I didn't prevail, I would pray that I was wrong. I can only tell you that I've been doing this a long time. I believe I know what I'm talking about, and I think that it's very, very important.

And so, for whatever it's worth, that's why we're here. And Tom was good enough to get this panel together so we could just have a conversation. That's what this is about, and I want to hear from you. And I'm sure after this is over all our friends in the media will want to hear what you said to me. *[Laughter]* And you feel free to tell them. But I think we ought to start now and have that conversation.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in a classroom at the Ohio Army/National Guard Facility. In his remarks, he referred to Hong Kong Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee; and President-elect Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan.

Remarks to the Community in Shakopee, Minnesota

May 12, 2000

Thank you. Well, first of all let me say I thank you all for coming out today. And I'm glad the weather made it easier on us.

I want to thank Terry and Kitty and Gene Hauer for welcoming us to their farm. I think we ought to give them a big hand; we have invaded them—*[applause]*. We managed to find enough unplanted space that I don't think we're taking their income away, but we certainly have invaded them today.

Dallas, thank you for your introduction and for your example. Secretary Glickman, thank you very much for the work you're doing, not only on this issue but on so many others to help the farmers of America. And I want to echo what you said about David Minge. He's a wonderful person. I've loved working with him these years I've been President. He is a straight shooter—although he never tells me any of those Norwegian jokes he's always telling Glickman—*[laughter]*—so I expect to get my quota before I leave.

But you should know that he is an extraordinarily attentive Representative for you. I don't even know how many times he's mentioned some specific thing of importance to the people of this district and the people of Minnesota. But if everybody worked on me as hard as he has the last 7 years, I wouldn't get anything else done, because he really does a good job for you.

I want to acknowledge in the audience today the presence of your Lieutenant Governor, Mae Schunk; the attorney general, Mike Hatch; Treasurer Carol Johnson; your State Ag Commissioner, Gene Hugoson—I think that's the right pronunciation—and the mayor of Shakopee, Jon Brekke, and his wife and beautiful daughter came out to the airport and met me. And I have here, somewhere, a beautiful crayon drawing she made for me—*[laughter]*—which I'm going to take back to the White House and save as a memory of coming here. It was really beautiful.

I want to thank Bob Bergland, also, as Dan Glickman did. And I understand the former

Governor of North Dakota, Alan Olson, is here. Welcome. I thank you for coming over.

But I want to say a special word of appreciation to a man who's been my friend for 25 years and one of my favorite people in the whole world: our former Vice President, your former Senator, and my former Ambassador to Japan, Walter Mondale. Thank you for being here. Thank you so much. I spent most of my early life listening to him speak. I'm just trying to get even now. *[Laughter]*

I also want you to know that I brought with me two representatives of American agriculture today when I came in on Air Force One: Scott Shearer with Farmland Industries, Nick Giordano of the National Pork Producers, and Susan Keith of the National Corn Growers, and they're out there working to help us. I thank them.

I want to also say to the people who are here from New Ulm, I'm sorry that I couldn't come out to your community. I hope you'll give me a raincheck. What really happened was—you know, politicians always give you some sidewinding excuse. Well, I'll tell you what happened. What really happened is, I've got to go back to work in Washington tonight, and I have to get back there an hour and a half earlier than I had originally thought I had to be there. I'm glad I got to come to the Hauers' farm, and I hope I get to come back there.

We have a community in my home State of Arkansas called Ulm. It's near Almyra, which is near Stuttgart—*[laughter]*—which is near Slovak. *[Laughter]* And they grow rice down there.

I'm glad to be back in Minnesota. I was in St. Paul last week, at America's first charter school, on my education tour. And I'm coming back in a couple of weeks to speak at Carleton College. If I come anymore, you'll make me pay taxes here, but I've had a good time. *[Laughter]*

I'd like to also acknowledge somebody who can't be here today, but somebody I really want to thank. Last week we had an astonishing event at the White House with President Carter and President Ford and virtually every living former Secretary of State, former Secretaries of Agriculture, former Trade Ambassadors, former Secretaries of Defense, National Security Advisers, two former

Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A whole history of the last 50 years in America was represented in the White House that day—except for Vice President Mondale's predecessor as Ambassador to Japan, Mike Mansfield, our former Senate majority leader; he's 98 years old now. When he was 15, he lied about his age to get into World War I. *[Laughter]* He's from Montana, and he's about—he would give a speech about as short as the one Terry gave today. *[Laughter]* Sort of consonant with coming from the northern part of the United States.

But when we swore Fritz in, Mike Mansfield came, and I said—you know, he was then, I think, 91 or 92—I said, "You know, he walks 4 miles a day." And Mansfield stood up in the back, and he said, "Five." *[Laughter]* So when he was 98 I said, "Mike, are you still walking every day?" He said, "Yeah, but I'm down to 2 miles a day." So I figure if we could all walk 2 miles a day at 98, we'd be doing pretty well.

I also want to thank your Governor, Jesse Ventura, who was there. He was the only sitting Governor who came. And he's been just great to support this initiative, and I'm grateful for him. It's good for you, and it's good for America. He's not a member of my party; he didn't have to do it, and it meant a lot to me that he showed up. I hope that it will mean something to you, too.

When my staff was boning me up on getting ready to come here and briefing me about the history of this area, I learned that the first citizens of Shakopee—I'll get it right—were pioneers in more than one sense. Way back in the 19th century, they were already trading with China. China was then the biggest and richest fur market in the world, and many of the pelts they bought came from here, from the shores of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. They found markets in China.

Then trade was a small, though interesting part of your past. It's going to be a much bigger part of your future, one way or the other. That's why I wanted to come here to talk about expanding trade in China, what it means for farmers like you, for States like Minnesota, and, even more important than that, for the future of our children and America in this new century.

In less than 2 weeks, Congress will vote on whether to provide permanent normal trading relation status with China. Now, PNTR, that's pretty arcane sounding. But what it means, as you've already heard, is that China will join about 130 other countries with whom we have trading that is governed by international rules of trade, plus whatever specific agreements we have with them.

In 1979, when President Carter and Vice President Mondale and Bob Bergland were involved in opening our relationships with China, we signed a trade agreement. And ever since then—and 21 years, now, every year—we have granted them what used to be called most-favored-nation, but really was normal trading relations. We did it on an annual basis. And the idea behind doing it on an annual basis was, we knew we had big differences with the Chinese. They were a Communist country; we were a democracy. They had labor, human rights, and religious rights practices with which we did not agree. We were trying to continue to work with them to resolve their differences with Taiwan on a peaceful basis. And it was thought that the Congress reviewing this every year would give Congress—and through Congress, the President, whoever that happened to be—some way of reviewing where we were with China; whether it was in our larger national interests, as well as our economic interests, to review this every year.

So now, I am proposing that we give them permanent normal trading status and let them come into the World Trading Organization, where they'll be governed by the same rules that govern us and all the other countries that are in it. And I came to tell you why I think we ought to make that change.

The biggest benefit, as you have heard from Secretary Glickman, will probably go to the agricultural sector, in economic terms. One out of every three American acres grows exports. We are the world's largest exporter of agricultural products. During the last 5 years, in spite of the Asian financial collapse and the terrible thing it's done to farm prices, we've still seen our exports nearly double. If you look at gross cash receipts, trade means about twice as much to America's farmers as it does to the economy as a whole.

Minnesota is third in soybean exports and production, fourth in corn—feed corn—seventh in overall agricultural exports. In 1998 Minnesota sold \$2.4 billion in agricultural products to foreign markets, \$316 million to China—more than twice what you sold in 1993, when I became President.

As Secretary Glickman described, the magnitude of the Chinese market virtually defies the imagination. There are 1.3 billion people in China. It's no wonder already China consumes more pork than any other nation. It is also the world's largest growth market for soybeans and soybean products. When I was Governor of Arkansas, back 15, 16 years ago, I used to go to Taiwan. And Taiwan was our biggest export market; they have 17 million people. And since the Chinese people are the same, if you extrapolate from 17 million to 1.3 billion, it's almost incalculable what this could mean for soybeans. The dairy consumption in China is going up as people's incomes rise.

Now, that's the way they are today, with a fairly modest per capita income. It is projected that over the next 30 to 50 years, China will have the biggest economy in the world. And obviously, as the people grow wealthier and move more and more to the city, the markets will grow, not only because more people will be able to buy food but the per capita food consumption will go up.

What does it mean for China to go into the World Trade Organization? It means they won't subsidize their farm sector as they used to. They're already making adjustments—planting less wheat and less cotton, for example. There is no way the Chinese farmers can keep pace with the growth of their own consumers. But America's farmers can. And Congress can give you the chance to do so, but only if it votes for permanent normal trading relations. And I want you to understand why: because in order for the members of the World Trade Organization to let China in, and then to benefit from whatever trade concessions China makes—and they've made the most in their agreement with us—every one of the members has to agree to treat China like a member. So if we don't vote for permanent normal trading relations, it's like we're saying, well, they may be in there, but we're not going to treat

them like a member. And if we don't do that, what it means is, we don't get the benefit of the deal I just described to you. That's what this is all about.

This agreement, which we negotiated—and it's self-serving for me to say, I realize that, because it was negotiated by our Trade Ambassador, Charlene Barshefsky, with heavy input from Secretary Glickman and Gene Sperling, my National Economic Adviser, who was there in China with her—but it really is a hundred-to-nothing agreement economically. Normally, when we negotiate a trade agreement, we swap out, just like you do if you make a deal with somebody. Somebody says, you know, "I'll give you this," and you say, "Okay, I'll give you that."

This is not a trade agreement in that sense. This is a membership agreement. They say, "If you let us into this world trading unit, we'll abide by the rules, including rules that we weren't governed by before. And, in order to get in it, we'll agree to modernize our economy, which means we will drop our tariffs, open our markets, let you sell into our markets, let you invest in our markets." It is a huge deal.

If you look beyond agriculture, it used to be that if we wanted to sell manufacturing products in China, they'd say, "Fine; put a plant here." Or if we wanted to sell some high-tech products, they'd say, "Fine; transfer the technology to us." Now—that's one reason we have representatives from 3M company here—we'll be able to sell for the first time into the Chinese market American cars, for example, without putting up auto plants, without transferring the technology.

But nowhere will the benefits be greater than in agriculture. You've already heard from Dallas that export subsidies have kept American corn and other products from being priced competitively. No more. No more baseless health barriers, which China uses or has used, to keep our beef and poultry outside their borders. No more high tariffs on feed grains, soybeans, vegetables, meat, and dairy products. Indeed—as Secretary Glickman reminds me from time to time when we have problems with our European neighbors and friends—the Chinese have offered us lower tariffs on some farm

products than the European Union imposes today.

Now, China's going to grow no matter what we do, and they're going to get into the WTO. The only issue here—the only issue is whether we are prepared to give up this annual review in return for the economic benefits that we have negotiated. That is the decision before the Congress, and it seems to me that it's a pretty easy decision. I think if Congress turns its back on this opportunity, we'll spend the next 20 years regretting it. And I know we'll spend the next 20 years paying for it, in ways that go far beyond dollars in farm families' pockets.

This is a vote for our economic security. China agrees to play by the same trading rules we do, and if we don't like it, we have two options. One is, we can pursue them in the world trading organization mechanisms, which means it won't just be America against China, and they won't be able to say, "There are those big, ugly Americans trying to take advantage of us." It'll be us and everybody else who plays by the same rules.

But in addition to that, you need to know that we negotiated an agreement with China unlike any one we have with any other country, which says that we can go against them bilaterally, us against them, if they dump products in our market, or if for some reason, like changing currency, there's an enormous surge of their products in our market threatening to dislocate a lot of Americans. And they have agreed to let us bring action with a lower standard for proof of injury than we have in our own trade laws. Plus which we have got money set aside to monitor this agreement in greater detail than any one we've ever had. So I think it's a pretty clear issue.

Now, why isn't everybody for it? Well, some people say, "Well, maybe they won't keep their word." Well, we have trade disputes all the time. We've got two outstanding with Europe still that haven't been resolved, where we just keep running around. But you've got a better chance of getting it resolved with people in a rules-based, law-abiding international system than outside it.

Some people say, "Well, they still do a lot of things we don't like." Well, that's true. But

I can tell you that we'll have a lot more influence on Chinese foreign policy, when it comes to the proliferation of dangerous weapons, and on human rights and religious rights and political rights in China, if we have an open hand of working with them, than if we say no, if we turn our backs on them. I am absolutely certain of that.

And I just want to point out, that is why all of our allies in Asia, the democracies—Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand—these countries want us to give them normal trading status. They're very worried that we might not do this and that it will increase tensions in Asia and increase the chance of something bad happening between Taiwan and Japan and make China focus more on military buildups than building their economy and their relationships with their neighbors. That's why the President-elect of Taiwan wants us to approve this.

That's why Martin Lee, who's the leader of the democracy movement in Hong Kong—a man prohibited by law from even going to China. If anybody ought to have an axe to grind, you'd think he would. He came here to America to tell the Congress they had to vote for this because that was the way to get human rights and political freedom in China, to put them in a rule-based system of international law.

Yesterday there was a detailed report in the Washington press interviewing dissidents in China, people who have been persecuted for their beliefs. Every one interviewed said, America has got to approve this, otherwise America will have no influence to try to keep moving China toward democracy and freedom.

You know, we get frustrated, but China is an old country, and it's changing fast. Two years ago there were 2 million Internet users. Last year there were 9 million. This year there will be over 20 million. At some point, you tell me, when they get to 50 or 100 or 150 million—which by then will still be barely more than 10 percent of their population—the country will change forever. You cannot maintain top-down control.

And I think it might be interesting for you to know that not everybody in China wants us to do this. You know who is against it in

China? The most reactionary elements in the military and the people that run those old, uncompetitive state-owned industries that want to keep those subsidies coming, that want to keep these markets closed, and that want to keep their thumb on the little folks in China.

Look, this may or may not work out. I can't tell you what the future will hold. Nobody knows that. And the Chinese will have to decide what path they take to the future. All I know is, this is a good economic deal, and it's an imperative national security issue, because we ought to at least get caught trying to give every chance to the Chinese to take a responsible path to tomorrow, to have a constructive relationship with this country when our children are grown, when our grandchildren are in school. We don't want a new arms race. We don't want every mutt in 2010 or 2020 to be calculating—see the papers full of stories about whether we're calculating whether we've got enough nuclear missiles against the Chinese.

We ought to give this a chance. We ought to give the future a chance to work. It's a great deal for you now. But as much as I want to help the farmers here and the farmers home, in Arkansas—so when I go home, they'll still let me come around—[laughter]—it's far more important to me to do the right thing by our national security, to give our children a chance to live in the most peaceful world in human history.

And that's what this is all about. So I hope you will support David Minge. I hope you will ask your Senators to vote for this. I hope you will ask the other Members of the Minnesota delegation to vote for this. And I hope you will tell people that it is clearly the right thing to do economically. It is clearly the next logical step from the historic news made in the Carter/Mondale administration in 1979.

But the most important thing is, it gives us a chance to build the future of our dreams for our children. People ask me all the time, "Now that you've been President 7 years, what have you learned about foreign policy?" And I always tell them, it's a lot more like real life than you think. And 9 times out of 10, you get a lot more reaching out a

hand of cooperation than you do shaking a clenched fist. That's what this is about.

Now, if they do something that's terrible that we're offended by, we don't give up a single right here to suspend our trade relations or do anything else that any emergency conditions might dictate. All we're doing is saying we'd like to build a future with you if you're willing to do it. And we're prepared to work over the long run.

I thank you for coming here today. I ask you to recognize that this is not a foregone conclusion. I believe it is by far the most important national security vote that Congress will cast this year. And if you can do anything as an American citizen, as well as Minnesota farmers, to help us prevail, you'd be doing a great thing for our grandchildren.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the barnyard at the Hauer Farm. In his remarks, he referred to farmers Terry Hauer, his wife Kitty and father Gene; Dallas Bohnsack, chair, Scott County Board of Commissioners, who introduced the President; former Secretary of Agriculture Robert Bergland, member, University of Minnesota Board of Regents; Scott Shearer, director of national relations, Farmland Government Relations; Nick Giordano, international trade counsel, National Pork Producers Council; Susan Keith, senior director of public policy, National Corn Growers Association; President-elect Chen Shui-ban of Taiwan; and Mayor Jon Brekke of Shakopee, MN, and his wife, Barb, and their daughter, Maria.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

May 6

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Fayetteville, AR.

May 7

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Little Rock, AR, and in the evening, they returned to Washington, DC.

May 8

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City to attend funeral services for John Cardinal O'Connor at Saint Patrick's Cathedral.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President has invited President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa for a state visit on May 22.

May 9

The President announced his intention to nominate Marjorie Ransom to be Ambassador to Yemen.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jerome A. Stricker as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The White House announced that the President will meet with President Fernando de la Rúa of Argentina on June 13 in the Oval Office.

May 10

The President announced his intention to appoint Eva S. Teig as U.S. Representative to the Southern States Energy Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles (Chuck) Yancura as a member of the Advisory Council of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint John R. Roderick as a member of the Arctic Research Commission.

The President declared an emergency in New Mexico and order Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe fire threats on May 10 and continuing.

May 12

In the morning, the President traveled to Akron, OH, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Shakopee, MN. Later, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Pamela E. Bridgewater to be Ambassador to Benin.

The President announced the nomination of Barry E. Carter to be Assistant Administrator, Bureau of Global Programs, Field Support, and Research at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas L. Garthwaite to be Under Secretary for Health for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted May 8

Owen James Sheaks,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Executive Service, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (verification and compliance) (new position).

Submitted May 9

Paul C. Huck,
of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, vice Kenneth L. Ryskamp, retired.

Marjorie Ransom,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Yemen.

Submitted May 11

Barry Edward Carter,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, vice Sally A. Shelton.

John W. Darrah,
of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, vice George M. Marovich, retired.

Joan Humphrey Lefkow,
of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, vice Ann C. Williams, elevated.

Ricardo Morado,
of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Texas, vice Filamon B. Vela, retired.

Michael J. Reagan,
of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Illinois, vice an additional position created December 10, 1999, pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. 372(b).

George Z. Singal,
of Maine, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Maine, vice Morton A. Brody, deceased.

Mark S. Wrighton,
of Missouri, to be a member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation, for a term expiring May 10, 2006, vice Robert M. Solow, term expired.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released May 8

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing a state visit of President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa on May 22

List of attendees of the President's meeting with organizers of the Million Mom March

Released May 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that President Fernando de la Rúa will meet with the President in the Oval Office on June 13

Transcript of a May 8 interview of Chief of Staff John Podesta and Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman by members of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters

Released May 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida

Released May 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and Assistant Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs P.J. Crowley

Released May 12

Announcement of nominations for U.S. District Judge for the Northern and Southern Districts of Illinois, the Southern District of Texas, and the District of Maine

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved May 5

S.J. Res. 40 / Public Law 106–198
Providing for the appointment of Alan G. Spoon as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution

S.J. Res. 42 / Public Law 106–199
Providing for the reappointment of Manuel L. Ibanez as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution